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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

GORDON SCHAFER

BACKGROUND TO BERLIN

ARNOLD KETTLE

CULTURE AND REVOLUTION

G. SMIRNOV

THE NEW MAN IN SOVIET SOCIETY

DISCUSSION:

MICHAEL McCREERY

ON CAPITALISM'S ECONOMIC PROSPECTS

ROBERT BROWNING
BILL TAIT

ON STAGES OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Editorial Comments

WE are facing the most critical situation since 1939. In their determination to prevent a turn in world affairs towards peace, the Western powers have consistently used all negotiations as a cover for stepping up their preparations for nuclear war. Talks on the permanent ending of nuclear tests were dragged out for three years, during which the nuclear forces of the West have been steadily extended; the Polaris base has been set up in Britain, with Polaris-loaded submarines cruising off the Soviet coasts; France has carried out nuclear tests in the Sahara; West Germany has been built up as the armed NATO shock force, and is setting the pace in Western aggressive policy.

The Soviet Union, with the aim of checking the drive to war, proposed a peace treaty with both existing German states and making West Berlin an independent free city, with its status and communications guaranteed by the four powers; if this was refused, the Soviet Union would have to sign a separate peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic. The Soviet proposal, which would have eased tension in Europe and created favourable conditions for further steps forward, was not only rejected by the Western powers: they used it as the occasion for more active war preparations, provocations and threats of war "to defend Berlin"—although any threat to Berlin comes only from the Western threat of war. Gordon Schaffer's article "Background to Berlin" on a later page outlines the building up of German militarism before and after the war as the imperialist vanguard against socialism; the present situation is the outcome of this policy. It is this mounting threat to peace which has compelled the Soviet government to resume nuclear tests, as a warning to the imperialists, to "cool the hotheads of nuclear war".

The report of John Gollan to the Executive Committee of the Communist Party, analysing this new and grave position, was published in full in the *Daily Worker* of September 11th. It makes a call for emergency action, for unity of all the peace and progressive forces to compel negotiations over Berlin.

Planning?

One of the curiosities of the T.U.C. was the praise bestowed by Mr. Harry Douglass, of the General Council, on French Economic Planning. We heard how the Monnet Plan had successfully raised the rate of industrial production, so that

France had greatly outstripped Britain in the rate of its growth.

Now if France is a planned economy, it is a decidedly peculiar one. From the end of the war down to the moment that de Gaulle put parliamentary government in chains, there was practically an annual governmental crisis, associated with the budget. French exports were notoriously over-priced and there was an almost permanent deficit in the balance of payments. Finally de Gaulle rectified this position by devaluing the franc by 17½ per cent. This raised prices all round and drastically reduced the purchasing power of wages.

Special measures were taken to prevent the unions from pushing up wages, including the suspension of the cost of living agreements. In fact Selwyn Lloyd, up till now at any rate, is a lamb compared with de Gaulle.

What the French have is investment planning (both of private and state owned industry) firstly with a view to the reconstruction of the basic industries and secondly with a view to rapid growth of industrial production. Whatever the general economic situation, the Planning Commission (Commissariat du Plan) pushed ruthlessly ahead with investment in new productive capacity. A rapid increase in industrial production was its aim, and all other aspects of the economy (for example, the balance of payments, the foreign exchange value of the franc) were subordinated to it. *There was no planning.* The different sectors of the economy worked independently of each other and the final result was usually unpredictable.

In Britain there was also one dominant economic aim—the safeguarding of the pound. All other considerations, particularly the growth of industrial production, were subordinated to that. The French in recent years got a fair increase in industrial production (the main benefits of which went to the monopolies); British capitalism got both a sub-standard increase of production and a weak pound.

The Chancellor and T.U.C.

Had the Chancellor of the Exchequer invited the T.U.C. to co-operate in economic planning on a capitalist basis, he would have received from the General Council an enthusiastic agreement. But circumstances compelled him to demand a wage pause at the same time, and so in the initial stages he got a poor response. General Council speakers like Messrs. Douglass and Woodcock and some of

the right-wing speakers from the Civil Service unions indicated that they were not averse to a wage pause, if it had been combined with a profits pause or a dividend pause, and if they had been consulted beforehand.

This is a matter of some importance. Since the end of the war capitalist economists have argued that it is possible to prevent major slumps or major inflations in a capitalist economy, by the government operating central economic controls, through which the capitalist economy could be regulated.

The Labour Party, with the capitalist international economic system operating against it, tried to control the economy by fiscal devices (raising and lowering taxes) and by direct controls (raw materials allocations, building controls, etc.). The latter were resisted, evaded and sabotaged by the capitalists and in the last year of the Labour government they began to be dismantled.

Along came the Tories claiming that the economy could be controlled mainly by monetary measures (raising or lowering bank rate, tightening or refusing credit). Those measures worked in the sense that in 1955, 1957 and 1960 they stopped headlong industrial expansion, but they also produced long periods of stagnation, so that Britain's economic growth was much slower than those of its European rivals.

The Tories at the moment are still applying a dear money policy, but they are also experimenting with the control of the economy by raising or lowering the level of consumption. A number of suggestions were made as to how this could best be done. Proposals were put forward for raising or lowering social insurance contributions, but as the Tories were raising them for quite other reasons than those relating to the control of the economy, this was rejected. The policy finally adopted was that of imposing surcharges or indirect taxation when it was thought necessary to lower consumption or to remove them when it seemed necessary to increase it.

Obviously a wages pause is an integral part of this policy, for there is no point in cutting working-class purchasing power by raising taxes if the workers are free to compensate themselves by raising wages. So the General Council should reconcile themselves to the fact that if they agree that the monopoly capitalist economy should be regulated by the government, some form of wage pause may be included in that regulation from time to time.

Some General Council spokesmen seemed to recognise this and made no objection in principle to such pauses, but confined themselves to arguing (i) that the unions ought to be consulted before

they are introduced, and (ii) there should be pauses in profits and in dividends also.

Regulation

No General Council spokesman dealt with the long term aspects of wages planning, such as the government is proposing, namely that employers and unions should co-operate with the government in estimating how far productivity is likely to increase in the period ahead and in taking steps to ensure that wages increases do not exceed increases in productivity. The supporters of this policy argue, quite correctly, that in comprehensive planning such as exists in a socialist society, wage increases are also planned. But such wage planning—in a society where the capitalist exploiter has been eliminated—is a means to dividing resources between personal consumption, the social services and accumulation, so facilitating planned expansion in all spheres. In capitalist society wage planning or regulation may be a means of reducing the workers' share of the social product in the interest of the monopoly capitalists.

We are *certain* of this intention, which is connected with the effort to promote a faster rate of economic growth in Britain. One of the most obvious reticences on the part of advocates of increased economic growth is in telling us where the resources are to come from. For if more is to be spent on new capital accumulation, less (either relatively or absolutely) must be spent on consumption, and to hold back consumption means holding back increases in wages and salaries. *That is the meaning of such types of capitalist planning.* The workers' income is to be regulated so that capitalist incomes will increase, and out of that increase will come the resources for increased investment. In other words this is state-assisted increase in working class exploitation, in the interests of a more rapid increase in monopoly capitalist expansion. How ridiculous is the equation, in the manner of Mr. Douglass, of the Tories going over to this policy with their conversion to socialist principles!

Housing the Arts

The special Committee of Enquiry set up by the Arts Council to study Housing the Arts in the English provinces pulls no punches in its report *Housing the Arts in Great Britain, Part 2*.—"The Needs of the English Provinces" (Arts Council, 5s.).

The intelligent foreigner visiting Britain, states the report, who wishes to see how in this country the arts are housed, is likely to find little of significance and interest outside London. Far too

many concert halls and theatres are artistic slums wholly unworthy of survival. They are, the report states, "an affront to the actors and musicians who work in them and a discouragement to the audiences who visit them." The committee does not condemn in the same way the art galleries, most of which were built more recently, but the list of existing theatres which it presents is most illuminating. At least two eighteenth-century buildings are still in use.

The report points out that Clause 132 of the Local Government Act, 1948, puts a very powerful weapon in the hands of local authorities. It places an upper limit on their expenditure in support of the arts, i.e., a 6d. rate (4½d. rate in Scotland). In 1959-60 the local authorities, had they so wished, *could*, on this basis, have spent over £16 million on the arts in England and Wales. In fact, the report says, "it is doubtful whether they actually used more than one-sixtieth of that amount".

The tendency for theatres everywhere to disappear is well known, and on this the report challengingly declares that in the first place there are many theatres now out of commission which could be put to excellent civic use if they were brought under the care and concern of the local authorities. "We should neither wring our hands nor feebly surrender when we hear that a local theatre is announcing its closure. . . . We should apply our means and energies to examining how far the event may prove to be the opportunity for creating a civic theatre on the model of those which abound in Germany and elsewhere." It is significant that the Committee was forced to add a late additional note to their report describing the situation at Stoke-on-Trent, which is so typical of the general process. On June 30th, 1961, it was announced that the Theatre Royal, Hanley, seating 1,376, had been sold by Moss Empires to Mecca Ltd., and would cease forthwith to serve as the only remaining live theatre in the Potteries.

An Indictment and a Call

Thus the whole report is a slashing indictment (which is made all the stronger by the restraint of its language) of the position of the arts under capitalism. It is not, however, a moan; it refers to the "intense local interest" and actually describes activities in theatres and concert halls in eighty different places. It justly claims that the post-war pattern of the provinces has shown the strength of the repertory movement, which has survived the growth of television, held its audiences and increased its status in the theatre as a whole. It makes a strong and measured case for local authorities to accept more responsibility. Its

main recommendation is that £150,000 a year should be made available by the government to local authorities—£100,000 for new building and £50,000 towards "refurbishing and renovating existing theatres and concert halls".

The amount asked for is, of course, pathetically small. Perhaps the report would have had more effect if its demands had not been so modest. But the present government will not give even this token tribute to the arts unless it is made to. The report provides some good material for a powerful and effective campaign.

The Writer's Commitment

John Mander's *The Writer and Commitment* (Secker & Warburg, 25s.) is an interesting contribution from the assistant literary editor of the *New Statesman* to the contemporary discussion of literary problems. Mander's book contains some good and perceptive criticism of recent literature—Arnold Wesker, Arthur Miller and Angus Wilson in particular—and exceptionally shrewd analyses of some of the work of W. H. Auden and George Orwell; but the underlying interest lies in the discussion of what is implied by commitment. Mander insists (i) that all writers are in fact "committed" in the sense that their work has willy-nilly moral implications and involves "responsibility", and (ii) that it is in the actual literature he produces rather than in some general attitude or explicit "position" that the nature and strength of a writer's commitment emerges.

With these promising starting points and with much of his incidental argument and judgment Marxist readers will be sympathetic. The weakness of John Mander's book is that, by apparently accepting an existentialist attitude to "responsibility", he robs that word of any precise or discussable objective meaning, so that we are left very much in the air as to what the writer is, or ought to be, actually committed to. In the end it looks as though to Mr. Mander commitment really does not mean much more than consistency. In spite of his left opinions he seems to be scared of politics. But here, at least, is a critic intelligently aware of contemporary problems, insistently affirming that "art is *about* something, that it has reference to something beyond itself by which it must ultimately be judged", and lively and progressive in his general sympathies; such qualities are rare enough in literary criticism.

The Films of Visconti

Luchino Visconti is the most respected of contemporary Italian film-makers and many critics consider him one of the greatest directors in the

world. Visconti is a Marxist and he has described how the work of Gramsci, founder of the Italian Communist Party, transformed his ideas about the realities and the prospects of Italian society. Two of his finest films *La Terra Trema* and *Rocco and his Brothers* deal with the problems of Southern Italy, exploited by the industrialists of the north as a colonial-type "backward area", a factor which now, with the Common Market and its boasted "mobility of labour", affects not only Italy but most of Western Europe.

Visconti's films are neither documentaries nor propaganda pieces. They are rather like intensely visualised novels in their leisureliness and detail, absolutely the antithesis of the slick, neat, fast-moving commercial films we are used to. The social problems that underlie them are seen through specific, deeply felt, human situations.

But, as Visconti himself has said: "In *La Terra Trema* I was seeking to express the whole dramatic theme as a direct outcome of an economic conflict. The key to the understanding of the spiritual and psychological conflicts is always social, even if the conclusions I reach are always those which concern the individuals whose cases I am describing. The yeast, the blood in the veins of history, is always thick with civic passion and social reasoning. It is the same with *Rocco*. I have concentrated my story on this family not just because they offered colourful material, but because my intention is to provoke not only pathos but also reasoning. At a moment when they try to make us believe that the south has been transformed because there are a few more asphalt roads and factories and some land has been divided up, I have preferred to listen to a deeper voice which tells me what the reality of the south truly means."

There has been a season of Visconti's films at the National Film Theatre in London and *Rocco and his Brothers* is at last being shown commercially.

Social Service Statistics

Britain's marvellous social services are a constant theme for self-congratulation in the press, radio and television in this country. A parallel line of thought is that the working class in Britain are pampered more than the workers in other countries and are damned ungrateful for all that is being done for them.

In the *International Labour Review* (the organ of the International Labour Office) for July-August 1961 there is a table comparing the relation of social service benefits to wages in the Common Market countries and in Britain. It compares the proportion of the various social ser-

vice benefits to the gross wages (wages before deduction of tax or employees' contribution). To the gross wages in each case there is added family (or children's allowances) in the countries covered.

Unemployment benefits as a percentage of the gross wages (plus family allowances) are as follows: Belgium 42.3; France 40.2; West Germany 51.8; Italy 19.3; Luxembourg 55.8; Netherlands 79.8 and United Kingdom 36.7.

Sickness benefits: Belgium 66.6; France 39.0; West Germany 70.5; Italy 47.5; Luxembourg 54.0; Netherlands 75.8; United Kingdom 34.0 (It will be noted that the United Kingdom is handsomely beaten by low standard Italy in respect to sickness benefits.)

Industrial injuries benefits: Belgium 71.3; France 46.7; West Germany 70.5; Italy 68.4; Luxembourg 78.4; Netherlands 75.8; United Kingdom 45.7. Again the United Kingdom is at the bottom of the league.

Of course, it can be argued that, while there are health service facilities on the Continent, there is nothing comparable with the National Health Service in Britain, and, when this is taken into account, the British social services look better, and, of course, the deductions from wages to finance social services are much greater on the Continent than here.

All this does not alter the fact that some of the British social services are not what they are cracked up to be.

Socialism and Mental Health

There has recently been considerable discussion of the deficiencies and perspectives of our mental health service, and a useful contribution has now been made by Mr. Kenneth Robinson, M.P. in *Patterns of Care*, a comparative study of the mental health services in France, Holland, the United States and the Soviet Union, just published by the National Association for Mental Health (2s. 6d.).

Of special interest to Socialists is the picture given of the position in the Soviet Union. Everyone would agree that prevention of mental illness is even more important than its treatment or cure, and here the Soviet Union is outstanding. Mr. Robinson says that while it is admitted that there is still a shortage of psychiatric beds, a steady increase in the provision is planned. He finds that the incidence of psychiatric illness in the Soviet Union is substantially lower than in Britain or the United States.

"This is the claim made by Russian psychiatrists, who attribute it to their socio-economic system and to the absence of unemployment. This may indeed be part of the answer. The

sense of community is strong everywhere in Russia, and with it the sense of 'belonging' and the type of loneliness and isolation which so often breeds mental disorder would be comparatively rare."

Administration in the Soviet Union is decentralised. The Ministry of Health provides funds, gives general direction on policy and the establishment of standards, but:

"There is a continuous effort to bring the services and their administration as close as possible to the communities they are designed to serve. Consequently there are no hospitals directly under the Ministry; a small (and decreasing) number are administered by the governments of the constituent republics of the Soviet Union; the majority are the responsibility of the cities and districts they serve. Community services, which are fairly extensive, are locally administered."

Apart from the relatively low incidence of mental illness Mr. Robinson found the Soviet Union outstanding in the ratio of staff to patients and in the public attitude to mental illness. In the Moscow hospital he visited, which he thought probably typical, he found the staffing ratio extremely high by Western standards, ensuring that every patient was able to receive regular therapy.

"Public attitudes towards mental illness in the U.S.S.R. seem to be admirable. Everyone dismissed out of hand any suggestion that there might be a stigma attaching to mental disease. Patients, I was assured, were regarded with sympathy and understanding no less by their relatives and neighbours than by the hospital staffs who care for them. This I believe to be substantially true, and it may not be too fanciful to suggest that the Russian people adopt the same kind of attitude towards the mentally ill as they do towards children."

Forthcoming Books

Of very great interest to students of Marxism is the list of new books announced by Lawrence & Wishart for the coming autumn. By the time this issue of *Marxism Today* has appeared they will have already published the second part of Jack Woddis's study of contemporary Africa, *Africa—The Lion Awakes* (21s.). This deals with the development and sweep of the liberation movement in Africa, placing particular emphasis on the part played by the trade unions. Together with *Africa—The Roots of Revolt* (21s.) published last year it makes a major contribution to a Marxist study of this vast key area of the world. The author is already preparing a third book on the future of Africa.

About the same time a new book by Emile Burns will be published—*Right Wing Labour, Its Theory and Practice* (paper cover, 7s. 6d.), an

analysis and critique of contemporary reformism.

Next due is *The Ruling Class: A study of British Finance Capital* (12s. 6d.) by Sam Aaronovitch. This embodies years of research into a subject which published official statistics try to conceal—the nature and scope of the actual groupings of finance capital which, with their international tie-ups, dominate Britain. As such it is a continuation of the same author's *Monopoly*, which ran into two editions. Written in a polemical style, it destroys the arguments of those who would like us to believe that "class is obsolete" and who popularise trick phrases like "the Establishment" or "managerial rule" to cover up realities of class rule and exploitation.

Some time in the autumn Lawrence & Wishart will publish a very welcome reprint—John Reed's *Ten days that Shook the World*. This is the famous eyewitness account of the Russian Revolution that has not been reprinted in Britain since 1932.

Towards the end of the autumn a paperback (5s.) will appear under the title of *The Big Sell* by Judith Todd. This describes the process of systematic capitalist brain-washing by radio, TV, the press, advertising, and the cinema in Britain. The author explains how, in days gone by, the Church and the feudal lords propagated their ideas free of charge. But today you have to pay for your brain-washing. And gulling the public has become big and profitable business. Into the hands of the same small monopoly group that controls so great a part of the wealth of this country and which dominates the key positions of the state, has now come a great part of the means of spreading ideas.

Classics of Marxism

In this same connection we have to thank the Foreign Languages Publishing House at Moscow for its magnificent effort in making available in the English language, at remarkably cheap prices, more and more of the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, some of which have long been unavailable here.

A paperback (6d. edition) of Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* has now appeared—the famous work where Marx first outlined the two stages of Communist society. And in this same booklet is Engels' *Critique of the Programme of a later Congress of the German Social Democratic Party, the Erfurt Programme* (1891), which has often been difficult to find in English.

The F.L.P.H. has also published three new paperbacks of Selections of the Writings of Lenin. The *April Theses* (6d.) brings together

some of the main speeches and writings he made on his return to Russia in April 1917, writings and speeches which charted the course of the further development of the Russian Revolution. Under the title of *On Socialist Ideology and Culture* (6d.) are brought together some of Lenin's main writings on this subject, including *A Great Beginning*, which describes the first workers' subbotniks, *The Tasks of the Youth Leagues*, October, 1920, and some works on Socialism and Religion.

Under the title of *Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism* (220 pp., 1s. 3d.) are brought together a number of Lenin's key writings on the national question and on the relation between socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism. Again, some of these have been extremely difficult to obtain in the English language.

At a moment when the interest in Marxism-Leninism is growing so fast in Britain, when the sales of the classics of Marxism have been rising so rapidly, it is indeed a great service to provide, at such cheap prices, so many of these important works.

Marxism and Aesthetics

In the last couple of years there has been a widespread discussion on Aesthetics in the socialist countries and a great deal of publication of books, pamphlets and articles on this complex and fascinating subject. Readers of the German language who would like to follow some aspects of this discussion will be interested to know that in the German Democratic Republic, the Institute of Applied Art has organised a series of discussions on Aesthetics and begun to publish a series of booklets on this subject. The first six in the series include studies on "The Nature of Form", "Dialectics and Aesthetics", "The Dilemma of Decadence", "Chemistry and Beauty" (a study of the role of the plastics in the applied arts), "Materialism and Aesthetics" and "The History and Laws of Aesthetics". The seventh, on "Humanism", is in the process of preparation.

These can be obtained direct from: Institut für Angewandte Kunst, Berlin W.8, Clara-Zetkin-strasse 28, and, of course, through Central Books and Collet's.

Background to Berlin

Gordon Schaffer

IN the early stages of the Berlin crisis, Walter Lippman gave a television interview which was seen in millions of British homes and brought a welcome touch of reality to a situation which was steadily being brought to the point of hysteria. He was asked why the Soviet Union has chosen this moment to insist on a peace treaty with Germany and he answered simply, "they are determined to act before Hitler's generals get nuclear arms".

This is the crux of the Berlin problem and the wider problem of Germany itself. The Russians and their allies in the Warsaw pact are convinced that when the West Germans and politicians talk about "regaining their lost territories", they mean what they say. The Russians know that such an attempt would never succeed, but it could plunge the world into nuclear war—a war in which the American bases, whether in their homeland or in the territories of their reluctant allies, would be subject to immediate attack. The question for the world is not whether 2 million people in West Berlin are to remain a capitalist enclave in a German state which is building socialism. That is an awkward problem,

but the free city proposal is designed to provide a way out. (If, as was proposed after the war, the Ruhr had been put under four-power control, it is doubtful if the Western powers would have accepted year after year a socialist enclave, with guaranteed rights of access by the Russians.)

The question is whether the world is to be dragged to destruction by the German militarists who twice in this century have plunged mankind into war. The terrifying fact about the present situation is that the West Germans have been even franker in their revenge propaganda than Hitler was in *Mein Kampf*. It is not only the neo-Nazi fringe in Western Germany who talk about "regaining the lost territories"; it is members of the German government from Adenauer downwards.

On August 12th of this year, a correspondent of the Sunday *Observer* went to Luneberg (where Marshal Montgomery received the Germans' "unconditional surrender" in 1945) to meet Lt.-Col. von Kleist, the Commander of the German panzer battalion to be stationed on British soil. He described how in one of the recreation rooms, there was a

large map showing West and East Germany and the territories lost after the war as "one and indivisible".

"Our hosts," wrote the *Observer* correspondent, "were genuinely surprised and concerned when it was said politely that although the sentiments implied by the map were natural, wisdom might have dictated a less obvious appeal to irredentism." Then the correspondent added casually that "by early next year, West Germany will not only have the biggest national ground force in Europe, other than the Soviet army, but possibly the best".

On the day the first West German troops arrived in Wales, with press and television ballyhoo plugging the line that "such nice young boys cannot possibly be held responsible for the Nazi crimes", the West German Embassy in London began to distribute a booklet blatantly declaring that the German High Command were in no way to blame for Hitler's war and were infamously treated by the Allies after the German surrender. The booklet blames the Allies for their "stupidity in disbanding what remained of the German army, because it was obviously needed to stem further Russian advances", and, quotes Dr. Adenauer for the statement: "No one must blame the professional soldiers on account of their former activity."

The *Daily Express* (August 28th, 1961), commenting on this latest whitewashing attempt, said, "Here is the official proof that the Germans believe they need feel no blame for the devastation and despair they caused from the moment they marched into Poland."

The corollary to the assertion that the Germans are not to blame for the last war or for the massacre of the Jews or for the murdered slave labourers or for the other horrors perpetrated in every country they invaded or attacked with their air force, is that they were unjustly treated when Sudetenland was restored to Czechoslovakia and the territories to the east of the Oder-Neisse line were ceded to Poland, with a small corner of East Prussia to the Soviet Union. And that is the line of propaganda being constantly pursued throughout West Germany and by broadcasts to East Germany, where the government of the German Democratic Republic has accepted the post-war frontiers and is doing everything possible to combat the elements who might be influenced by these appeals to aggressive German nationalism.

There was no other reason, except the belief that they would one day be able to lead the U.S.A., Britain, France and the rest of Western Europe into a war of revenge, behind the acceptance of rearmament by the West German militarists. When the West German army was first being established and the decision taken to accept into its ranks all former S.S. officers (the Gestapo section) up to the rank of colonel, the *Times* correspondent in Bonn wrote:

"The British army is deployed to defend the West German frontiers, but the Bundeswehr will be equipped to advance on Berlin or Breslau or beyond. The German Defence Ministry is planning an army that would be effective only on the Russian steppes."

The *Frankfurter Rundschau* wrote: "The slogan about injustice done to the nation circulates among the troops. Officers stir up resentment, purposely or not, and awaken thoughts of vengeance."

The ordinary people of West Germany did not want to see another German army. They had learned what war meant. I talked in West Germany at that time to people in all sections of their national life, and there was virtual unanimity that such a step would be a danger not only to Germany but the world. The peoples of Western Europe understood the danger as well. Hugh Dalton, a Minister in the British post-war Labour government, said German rearmament was the "road to hell". Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary in the same government, who finally surrendered to U.S. pressure and agreed to the policy, said earlier that they were "all against German rearmament". He also told the House of Commons: "The magnates of the Ruhr financed Hitler and in two wars were part of Germany's aggressive policy. We never wish to see their like return."

The British Labour Party swept to power in 1945 with a programme called *Let us Face the Future*, which declared: "We must make sure that Germany is deprived of all power to make war again. It must not be forgotten that in the years leading up to the war, the Tories were so scared of Russia that they missed the chance to establish a partnership which might well have prevented the war."

Walter Lippman wrote: "A German army would wish to march and would drag all the rest of us against Warsaw and Koenigsberg."

This is the story of the Gadarene swine. The Western powers have deliberately courted a peril, which they knew from the start threatened a third world war. And now the peril is imminent, now that in Berlin, microcosm of a divided world, any incident can precipitate the final distaster, they try to persuade the people that the West German militarists are the defenders of freedom. They tell the American people that a nuclear war would mean 20 million dead and the American press (at least the newspapers quoted here) declares that they are all prepared to die for Berlin. They brutally tell the British people that there is no defence for them against nuclear bombs, but they are still ready to give the West German revenge-seekers nuclear weapons.

How did we reach this tragic point and what are the measures necessary to save mankind from this terrible danger?

German Militarism

German militarism launched two world wars. The forces behind both wars were based on the powerhouse of the Ruhr and the determination of German capitalism to secure its "place in the sun", comparable to the older capitalist countries. But the First World War produced not only the defeat of Germany but the emergence of the first socialist country. The German working class was ready to follow the same revolutionary policy after the defeat of the Kaiser, but they were suppressed with the active assistance of Germany's former enemies. The war of intervention signalled the Second World War before the first had ended just as the bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, directed politically at Russia, though destroying hundreds of thousands of Japanese, were the first blows of world war three.

After the First World War, the German General Staff was illegally preserved and had a secret telephone line to the Weimar government. The Weimar Republic rearmed in direct defiance of the Versailles Treaty. Hitler and his gangster party were the creatures of the Ruhr industrialists. Fritz Thyssen, the steel king, whose son is back in power with a bigger fortune than ever, told in *I Paid Hitler* (published in England in 1941) how the Ruhr industrialists accepted Hitler as their man, financed him and backed him to the end. Hitler was their cure for communism and their weapon against Bolshevism.

The money and the support of the German industrialists made it possible for the Nazi gangsters to bludgeon the German working class into submission, except for the brave minority—mostly the Communists—who went on with the fight. The money and the jobs of the Jews were the pay-off for the gangsters.

Hitler's foreign policy was based on the same appeal to the Western nations as he had made to the Ruhr industrialists. He was the bulwark against Bolshevism. He used German nationalism to create the opportunities for aggression. Those people who talk today as if the only solution is "self-determination and free elections" should remember how once the Nazis got a foothold in Austria they destroyed democracy and secured majority support for the Anschluss. There were louder cheers in Vienna when Hitler came in, than for Adenauer and Brandt in West Berlin. The Saar voted in a supervised plebiscite to join a Reich in which the Nazis were already dominant. The Rosenberg plan for the Germanic Union to include the Balkans, Scandinavia and the Ukraine was the gospel of the "master race". The Western powers saw where it was leading, but they always believed Hitler would go East. The American monopolies built links with the Nazi industries, which gave Hitler the vital war materials, without which he could never have built the armed

forces. The story of the link-up of the trusts is told in official reports by the anti-trust division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Neville Chamberlain handed Czechoslovakia to Hitler at Munich. One of his main lieutenants in this policy was Lord Home, now Foreign Secretary. Up till March 1939, when the Soviet Union appealed for a conference of all nations threatened by Hitler to consider collective resistance, war could have been averted. The West still trusted Hitler to go east.

During the war and with the creation of the grand alliance, which finally crushed the Nazi armies, the peoples saw that the struggle was against fascism. They demanded an anti-fascist war. Many of their leaders were just as determined it should not be an anti-fascist war. Truman in America and Moore Brabazon, a member of the Churchill Cabinet, in Britain, expressed the hope that Russians and Germans would destroy each other.

The Potsdam Decisions

In 1945, no leaders could stand publicly against this pressure from the peoples, and at Potsdam measures were agreed between all the allies to remove the danger of a revival of German militarism. There it was decided to confirm the new frontiers agreed at Yalta and to remove most of the German-speaking populations from the former German areas. It was a hard and cruel decision, but millions had been torn from their homes and taken to Germany for slave labour, and it was no less a burden for Germans to be taken to within the new German boundaries. To say, as is now alleged, that these frontiers were temporary until a peace treaty is sheer nonsense in view of this removal of the population. It must be remembered that Poland, the country principally involved, was under Russian, German and Austrian occupation for 150 years, and was only reconstituted as a state after the First World War. The new Polish government, encouraged by the Western powers, joined in the war of intervention against the Soviet revolution and seized huge tracts of the Ukraine. It was inevitable that after the Second World War, this stolen territory, which no one ever suggested was Polish-speaking, should go back to the Soviet Union. On the other hand, there was a mixed population in the west of Poland, and there was the corridor to East Prussia created by the settlement after the First World War.

The Potsdam decision was designed to remove the danger of Germany's using the German-speaking populations to foment trouble. The Sudeten Germans, who had paved the way for the Nazi annexation of Czechoslovakia, were also sent to Germany, and the territory restored to Czechoslovakia.

The Potsdam conference also decided on specific measures to destroy not only the Nazi party but the

causes that brought it into being. These, it should be emphasised, were not Russian decisions. They were agreed by America, Russia and Britain. France accepted later, but in the early stages obstructed every move to unify the various occupation zones.

The measures against the Nazis decided on the punishment of those guilty of provable crimes against the German people or the countries invaded. It was agreed the country where the crime was committed should carry out the trial and inflict the punishment. The Nuremberg criminals (the Nazi leaders) were dealt with by an international court. Most of the criminals due to be dealt with in Western Germany or by the Western allies either received minor punishment or escaped altogether. Some of those on the accepted war criminal lists of Poland and other countries now hold high office in West Germany.

The harder problem was to deal with the millions who were not war criminals, but who had played an active part in the Nazi party—a later directive of the four allies stipulated that industrialists who served Hitler were equally guilty even though they were not party members. The Potsdam decision laid down that active Nazis were to be removed from key sections of the national life, including education, government and local government administration, the police, the law and other jobs where they could be dangerous.

Then the Potsdam agreement decided on measures to deal with the causes of Nazism and laid down the duty of the occupying powers to break up the trusts and cartels, carry out land reform, and a number of similar measures. It was laid down that the allies would work for the reunification of Germany on the basis of these decisions.

Western Disruption

The inescapable fact about the post-war history of Germany is that the measures agreed at Potsdam were carried out in the Russian occupation zone; they were not carried out in the Western zones, now the Federal German Republic. Those who argue on the legalities of the situation should remember there are arguments on both sides. In the absence of a peace treaty, the Potsdam agreement was the law of Germany, and it can be argued that the German Democratic Republic is the only part of Germany with a legal foundation.

But it is more fruitful to consider why the two German states have taken their different paths and what it means for the world. The Potsdam agreement was ignored by the Western powers because it could only be carried out by vast social changes. Nazism was created by capitalism, and to attack it on the lines of the Potsdam agreement would be to

undermine capitalism. That was why laws passed by the parliaments representing the lands or provinces in the British occupation zone to nationalise their industries were vetoed by the British Labour government on pressure from America. The province of Hesse, in the American zone, voted, as did Saxony in the Russian zone, to take over the property of war criminals—and that included most of the big industries. It was vetoed by the Americans. No serious land reform was carried out in the West. As for the cartels, James Stewart Martin, who headed the decartelisation team sent by the U.S., described in his book *All Honorable Men* why his mission failed. The men behind the German cartels were now powerful in Washington. They had even maintained contact while America and Germany were at war.

So the forces that created Hitler came back. Since then the evidence has piled up to show that hundreds of judges who administered the Nazi laws are back. The industrialists who grew rich out of slave labour, who made the poison gas for the extermination of the victims in the concentration camps, are richer than ever. And the generals are not only back with a new German army, they are commanding the forces of NATO.

In the early years after the surrender of Germany there was economic chaos. Money was of no value; cigarettes became a currency and sometimes fell to pieces before anyone smoked them. There was plenty of food in the countryside, but none in the towns, and the economy was kept going by a form of barter. The Russians in their zone had helped the anti-fascist forces to create a people's police, which did something to check the all-prevailing black market, but millions in both parts of Germany were hungry.

During this period an agreement by the Allies to take part of German industrial plant as reparations was carried out. That again was a hard decision, but Russia and Poland in particular were devastated, and certainly had the right to some compensation. In the Western zones, some machinery was taken away and given to various Allies, but the Americans who did not suffer war devastation were able quickly to install modern machinery.

The Cold War

By 1947, the cold war had begun and Germany was becoming its focal point. Before the year ended the four-power co-operation was practically at an end, although the machinery still existed in Berlin. But another factor was coming into play: the U.S.A. had the monopoly of the atom bomb. Both the diary of James Forrestal, Secretary of Defence in the Truman administration, and the private papers of Senator Vandenberg confirm that

in 1947, the British government as the price of Marshall Aid was forced to release the United States from a pledge not to use the bomb without British agreement. Forrestal's diary also records his conviction that the period of America's monopoly of the bomb were her years of opportunity, but he was "still uncertain whether the country would be resolute in the bomb's use".

At the end of 1947 the London Conference of Foreign Ministers broke down when the Russians pressed for the drafting of a peace treaty with Germany, and the Western powers said that the character of its government must be first determined.

Then followed a sequence of events which culminated in the final division of Germany. In January 1948, according to the public testimony of Wilhelm Elfes, former Lord Mayor of Cologne and a close colleague of Adenauer, the Americans told Adenauer plans were being prepared for a "preventive war" against Russia.

On March 5th, 1948, General Clay, American commander in Berlin, sent a telegram to Washington, reproduced in his diary, saying he had a feeling war might come with dramatic suddenness. The telegram continued: "I cannot support this change in my own thinking with any data or outward evidence in relationships except to describe it as a feeling of a new tenseness in every Soviet individual with whom we have official relations."

The Splitting of Germany

On the basis of General Clay's "feeling" the U.S.A. was alerted for atomic war. Gradually the four-power machinery for the administration of Germany was folding up. The Western zones of Germany had been incorporated in a Western Europe operating the Marshall Plan (described by Molotov "as a plan which had at its heart, the rebuilding of Western Germany as an arsenal"). Then in June came the announcement of the formation of a West German state, and on June 18th, the separate currency reform in Western Germany.

The issue of currency (printed months before by the Americans) in Western Germany meant the final division of the country. The decision to do so was made at the very moment a four-power committee had reached agreement on all the main points for an all-German currency reform. I was in Berlin that week-end. The Russian commander in Berlin, Marshal Sokolovsky, went on the air as soon as the decision to change the money the following day was announced. He warned that this was an irrevocable step. There was no reply from the West. The Russians taken by surprise mobilised printing works to produce stamps which could be gummed on to the old notes. The economy of the whole Eastern zone was threatened with disruption from the

repudiated currency in the West which could still be used in the East. That was the origin of the "blockade" of West Berlin, where contrary to a specific pledge by the Americans, the new Western currency was also issued. The Allies knew the Russians would have to take measures to protect their zone. Out of it came the air lift.

Back in Washington, the American Cabinet decided to send more B-29 bombers to Germany and to ask the American Ambassador in London to explore the possibility of sending bombers to Britain. The Forrestal diary records that somewhat to the surprise of the Americans the British agreed, and the Ambassador was instructed to ask Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, whether he had "fully explored and considered the effect on British public opinion, and the implications and inferences".

The editor of the diary spells out the "inferences". Quite bluntly he explains that they would "bring the atom bomb within striking distance of Moscow".

Forrestal wrote in his diary after the British had agreed to more bombers: "We have the opportunity now of sending these planes and once sent they will become an accepted fixture."

By July 21st Clay was pressing for permission to send an armoured convoy through to Berlin and expressing the view that the French would fight and that twenty good divisions would hold the Russians on the Rhine. But, as the diary points out, there were not twenty divisions available. That was why war did not come in 1948.

There you have the starting point of the plan to rebuild the West German military machine. Foster Dulles confirmed it in the winter of the following year in Paris. An off-the-record speech leaked to the *National Guardian*, New York, in which he said that the air lift should not be called off until Western Europe had agreed to the necessary forces. The Americans could atom bomb Moscow, but they could not defend Europe and the only manpower they could rely upon must come from Germany.

Step by step this policy has been worked out. The Labour Party in Britain betrayed every principle it professed by backing this rebuilding of an army officered by the men who fought Hitler's war and by bludgeoning the West German Social Democrats who had stood out against it.

It is a long story, but it is impossible to understand the present situation without examining this background. When Germany was divided by the currency changes, the Russians agreed to the setting up of the German Democratic Republic in their zone. Two states began to build their own lives, with different economic systems and social ideals. But the East Germans consistently called for discussions on reunification and, when the different economies reached a point where they clearly could not be

merged, for a federation. This policy changed only when the rearmament of Western Germany became an established fact and when it became perfectly clear that the West intended to take no measures against the restoration to power of Hitler's generals.

This is the reason two separate states are going their own different ways.

Plans for Aggression

But as the West German army has grown in strength its threats have become more blatant—not only general threats but specific plans for aggression. In mid-1960, two high officers of the West German army, Major Bruno Winzer, who was public relations officer to the Southern Command, and Captain von Gliga, who was adjutant to the Inspector-General of the air force, went over to the German Democratic Republic with detailed plans and maps showing that a lightning war against the G.D.R. was being planned. The idea was to use an incident, either real or faked, in the G.D.R. to launch the attack, to occupy the territory and proclaim that an internal German question had been settled. The calculation was that the Warsaw powers faced with a *fait accompli* would not launch world war to restore German territory to the former government. The government of the German Democratic Republic made these plans public, invited the Allied Commands in Germany to inspect the documents, and in conjunction with the Soviet Union made clear that the Warsaw powers would defend their ally.

The G.D.R. is not only threatened with direct aggression. It is the constant target for sabotage and other attempts to disrupt the economy, and in West Berlin the offices of organisations openly seeking to disrupt the socialist states openly flaunt their aims. One office is publicly aimed at the Soviet Union. From West Berlin, accessible without any control from West Germany, agents of these organisations could move into East Berlin without any hindrance, and since East Berlin is the capital of the G.D.R. it was very difficult without using a vast machinery of inspection to prevent their getting to the rest of the Republic.

In Berlin two different social systems live side by side. There is much to be said for either, but there is nothing to be said for allowing the racketeers to get the best of both. And that is what happened until the sector boundaries were closed by the government of the G.D.R. with the support of their Warsaw allies. In East Berlin necessities, transport, bread, fuel and light, and above all, rents, are cheaper than in West Berlin. You get a better meal for two in a good restaurant in East Berlin for say 9 East Marks than you get for 9 West Marks in the West. On the other hand certain goods, particularly luxuries, are

cheaper in West Berlin. The East German economy is planned and the priorities are the necessities. Yet until the sector borders were closed there was a black market exchange of between 4 and 5 East Marks to 1 West Mark. In a small degree this was assisted by East Berliners, who were willing to accept the rate so as to get luxury goods in West Berlin, but in the main it was maintained by the considerable sums put into West Berlin by the Western powers. The East Germans made a rule that identity cards must be produced in the East Berlin shops and only citizens of the G.D.R. served, but there were plenty of people willing to buy on commission for the West Berliners. Then there were many thousands who worked in the West, often at cut wages because they were living in East Berlin at low rents, with very much better social services, and could change their West money at the black-market rate.

These economic factors costing the G.D.R. economy millions of dollars a year were a bigger factor than the refugees in determining the G.D.R. decision to close the sector boundaries.

The "Refugees"

What is the truth about the "refugees"? First it must be stressed that there has been a considerable flow both ways. Moving from one part of Germany to another is not like emigrating, and family and domestic reasons have been responsible for quite a lot of the movement. Many have come to the G.D.R. from the West because conditions are better, particularly in regard to rents, health services, education, and kindergarten facilities for women with families. In other cases skilled workers have been offered jobs in the West German industries.

But there is a great deal of evidence to show that the West Germans have been offering inflated wages to skilled workers, doctors, scientists and others as a deliberate weapon to damage the economy of the G.D.R. One example I heard of personally was a printing firm which recruited printers months in advance and banked their wages, so that there was a nest egg waiting when they came across.

Most of the young technical and professional workers received free training at the expense of the East German workers. It is not surprising there was anger as many of those who had accepted public money to become trained promptly went over to the West. We in Britain would be equally angry if we trained teachers or doctors and they promptly went to America.

There are also numbers who do not like the hard job of building socialism. There are millions of well-paid jobs in a capitalist economy—advertising agents, salesmen, stockbrokers and the like who are just not wanted in a socialist economy. In

addition, there were also psychological mistakes on the part of the officials in the G.D.R. Parents felt aggrieved when their children did not make the grade for some form of education on which they had set their heart—just as they do in Britain—but they might well have relatives in the West willing to pay for the training. Cases like this and others involving bureaucratic decisions were not always treated with the understanding they needed.

Then there has been the ceaseless propaganda, some of it broadcast from Berlin, appealing to the worst elements in German nationalism.

The peoples in the West, who suffered twice this century from German militarism and will assuredly perish if it succeeds in launching war again, should be eternally grateful that one German state exists, which accepts the frontiers with its neighbours, which combats ceaselessly the efforts to revive aggressive German nationalism, and which has proposed a treaty of peace which would end the build-up of arms in both Germanys and take them both out of their respective alliances.

One thing is certain. There can be no settlement unless both German states are brought into the discussions and the existence of two German states recognised. There can be no reunification of Germany while the men who served Hitler are still powerful in Bonn. Berlin will remain a flashpoint until the West joins in an agreement which will prevent the Western part being used as a centre of disruption, sabotage and war preparation. Unless the plans to hand nuclear arms to the West German generals are halted, the world will remain on the edge of annihilation.

The Forces of Peace

Despite all the dangers, the forces of peace are still capable of imposing their will. The West German revenge-seekers are willing to jeopardise the very existence of the human race, but their power for evil depends on the backing they have received from the United States and the other Western powers. No possible American, British or any other Western interest would be served by allowing them to become more powerful. The policy of brinkmanship over Berlin is based on the same fallacy as the earlier West German plans for a blitzkrieg against the G.D.R. Once the West is made to understand that the G.D.R. will resist, with the backing of the majority of its people and in particular the armed working class, and with the support of the Warsaw Pact countries, the brinkmanship bluff is called. That is what must emerge out of the coming negotiations.

Peaceful coexistence is the only alternative to war, and the German problem mirrors the problem of the

world as a whole. The peace treaty proposals of the Soviet Union and the G.D.R. offer a way of coexistence.

Is it possible for the West to accept such a solution or will they allow the generals and fire-eating politicians to lead us all to disaster? The history of the last few years has shown that under pressure from the logic of events and the demand of the peoples for peace, even the fire-eaters have been made to accept the realities of a situation. They asserted that the Suez Canal, Cyprus, Persia, Iraq, Kenya and many other areas of conflict were points from which they could never retreat. The denunciations of Makarios and Kenyatta were more vitriolic than anything they say about Ulbricht. Yet they have been forced to accept peaceful solutions.

The imperialist powers resisted to the limit of their strength the inevitability of colonial liberation and the need to coexist with the countries which had gained their freedom. They are holding on with all the weapons they possess to the colonial areas, which have yet to win liberation.

To accept coexistence and peaceful competition with socialist countries, particularly now when socialism is going ahead with giant strides, is even more bitter for them. They hate the G.D.R. more than any other country because it has taken part of the second most powerful capitalist country out of the chain of world imperialism. Yet they know that the period of wars of intervention has passed. They know that the new monster they have created in Western Germany will fail just as Hitler failed. Coexistence with the socialist world is just as inevitable as coexistence with the countries liberated from colonialism.

A Roosevelt would have faced this reality and the world situation would change overnight, not because the military-industrial complex, which even Eisenhower condemned, would be any less powerful, but because, in the final analysis, if the world is to survive the United States will be forced to recognise that there is no other way.

Because there is no other way, the peace movements of the world can embrace all sections of the people and can impose their will. The *Daily Express* reported on August 30th that Adenauer had told Kennedy that "failure to stand firm over Berlin might precipitate a wave of neutralist opinion in West Germany". That is exactly the basic issue of the present crisis—whether Germany shall be in the hands of the militarists who served Hitler or find a way of neutrality as the first step to a solution for their divided country.

If the British Labour movement instead of allowing its leaders to make neutrality a dirty word had given a lead to this repudiation of the threats of war, it would be a different world today.

Culture and Revolution

A Consideration of the Ideas of Raymond Williams and Others

Arnold Kettle

IT is six years since Richard Hoggart published *The Uses of Literacy* and since then the discussion of cultural problems by writers of left sympathies has become a rather common feature of British intellectual life. *Declaration, Conviction and Out of Apathy*, all collections of essays by various hands, were orientated in this direction. Recently, Richard Wollheim's pamphlet *Socialism and Culture* (a Fabian Tract) and John Mander's book *The Writer and Commitment* have appeared. Discussion of the problems they raise in such journals as the *Observer*, the *New Statesman* and *The Times Literary Supplement* has become a more or less regular thing, with such figures as Angus Wilson, Kingsley Amis and (in a very interesting article) Michael Tippet participating. There is no need to remind readers of *Marxism Today* of the important contributions to the subject made by John Berger and by C. P. Snow in his discussion of the "two cultures". If we focus attention in this article particularly on the work of Raymond Williams—*Culture and Society* (first published 1958 and now a Penguin) and *The Long Revolution* (1961)—it is because his contribution has been particularly solid and systematic and looks like being influential.

Raymond Williams is a writer whose work commands respect even when one has fundamental criticisms to make about it. He is a serious writer, not only in the rather unfortunate sense that his work notably lacks any sort of humour, but in the good sense that he keeps his eye firmly on the object and does not go in for the exhibitionist display of personal cleverness which is too common a feature of much of the work under consideration. He is also a serious Socialist in the sense that (despite an excessive respect for certain aspects of established culture) he genuinely wants fundamental social change and has a real and unsentimental feeling and respect for the working class. This emerges perhaps more clearly from his fine novel *Border Country* than from his theoretical books.

"Border Country"

Border Country, a novel about working-class life in an Anglo-Welsh border village during the last forty years, is a very distinguished piece of work and in many ways significant in the light it throws on Raymond Williams's development. What

is particularly good in the novel is the realistic evocation of working-class life, the strong detailed descriptions of actual work and activity, and the historical sense of change, illustrated especially in the sections on the General Strike and afterwards. In his portrait of Harry Price, the railway worker, father of Matthew, the scholarship boy who has become a university lecturer, Williams succeeds impressively in depicting a man who, though inarticulate and without much political consciousness, strives to hold on to values which are essentially working-class values.

Border Country is a sad book, though the truth and honesty of it make it a good one. It is sad for two reasons. Both the key relationships in the novel are unresolved, or such resolution as there is implies a kind of defeat. The first is the relationship between Harry Price and his friend Morgan Rosser. Morgan is articulate and politically conscious where Harry is merely a good man, standing up for the right. And Morgan, just because of his socialist hopes, is bitterly disillusioned by the failure of the General Strike, and, though his *opinions* remain unchanged, gradually modifies his way of life, becoming a small businessman and, more and more, a cynic. So the curve of the relationship between Morgan and Harry produces an image in which political consciousness and moral rectitude get further apart. The man conscious of the need to change the world is corrupted while working-class values are maintained by the inarticulate worker whose dearest ambition (mixed as it is with apprehensions) is that his son should go to Cambridge.

The second relationship on which the book pivots is that of Harry and his son Matthew. Matthew comes back to Wales from London to watch his father die. He is acutely conscious of his home not only in its physical contrast to London, but as the border country between two ways of life, two classes. Will he justify his father's hopes, his father's life and values? Again, the problem is unresolved. Matthew is an economic historian; he is carrying on a sociological investigation into the movements of population in South Wales. His father dies and he returns to his suburban home and family. What has he learned from his father's life? What will he do to justify and continue it? Uneasily one feels that he will probably write an article for the *New Left Review*.

Border Country, quite apart from its artistic virtues, is an interesting book from several points of view. The sadness I have remarked on is significant because partly it is a just reflection of a sad moment of history for the working class—the defeat of the left in the General Strike and the subsequent period of demoralisation and retreat. But another aspect which contributes to the sadness has less objective basis and is, rather, a reflection of a limitation in the author's own point of view. This is epitomised by the last pages of the novel—the pretence that Matthew Price's dilemma is in some way solved in that cosy house in Hampstead Garden Suburb. It is not, heaven knows, that one objects to Matthew living a reasonably comfortable life with his wife and children: that is fair enough. What one jibs at is the implication that he has in some way absorbed and inherited what is valuable in his father's life and is likely to carry forward to something like fulfilment the working-class values which are at the root of Harry Price's life and story.

It has been noticed often enough that negative "angry young men" attitudes of frustration and cynicism are bound up with the social phenomenon of the emergence in Britain of a "new intelligentsia"—the scholarship boys from the working class and petty bourgeoisie who find themselves caught between two worlds—a border country between the working and the ruling classes. Raymond Williams has none of the more disagreeable features of the angry young men: but it is significant that he, too, in this book which projects imaginatively the personal dilemma involved in this social situation, cannot resolve the problem, though he can say true and valuable things about it.

The Social Context

I have discussed *Border Country* at some length, not only because it is a novel I admire, but because it seems to me helpful to see Raymond Williams's and other comparable recent contributions to the question of culture and society within the social context from which they emerge.

The comparatively sudden spotlighting of the problem of culture as of special importance is itself interesting. It is a real problem and a most important one, that is quite certain; yet one cannot but feel that its current popularity—as opposed to other aspects of the contemporary situation such as economic analysis or straight politics—has a certain significance. Culture, even allowing for the difficulties of translation from one language to another, is at best a somewhat vague word. If the sciences of politics and economics and history are still only struggling towards scientific status, they are at least a good way ahead

of sociology, the discipline relevant to the study of culture as conceived by most contemporary British and American writers. And one strongly suspects that this very vagueness has a certain attraction. Does it not correspond perhaps with the vagueness of the discontents of present-day Western intellectuals?

You cannot live in the middle of the twentieth century without being aware of living in a changing world. In Britain today, from all sides, even from the Tories, comes an insistent plea for "new thinking" to correspond with the changed and changing realities of the time. There is a general, almost universal, sense that something is wrong and pretty fundamentally wrong. "You've never had it so good" may have taken a trick or two, but even as an election slogan it got as many laughs as votes and in the autumn of 1961 no by-election candidate will dare use it.

And yet this strong, general sense that something is rotten in the state of Britain is not accompanied from either the Tory or Labour side by any clear political or economic analysis either of what is wrong or what can be done about it. The reason for this is that any objective analysis reveals more and more clearly the bankruptcy of the capitalist system which, under the title of Western Democracy or the Free World, both major political parties and all major organs of news and opinion are committed to defend. Even independent "left" thinkers, in so far as they feel themselves committed to the West as more "democratic" than the socialist sector of the world, are unable to see clearly a political or economic way forward for Britain. And so the tendency is all the time to concentrate rather ineffectually on isolated areas of the general problem which, just because they *are* seen in isolation from the central economic and political needs, can never be decisive in the struggle for social change.

The idea that what is wrong with twentieth century British society is its *culture* is an idea that has a particular appeal to thoughtful, frustrated and sensitive people. The chief reason for its attraction is, of course, that it is true. The culture of Britain, whether one uses the word in the broad sense of a "way of life" or in the narrower sense of the "condition of the arts" is in an appalling condition. Dominated by the profit-system which inevitably leads culture to be treated as a commodity to be produced cheap and sold for what can be got for it, commercial culture degrades human life wherever it touches it. It leads to a continuous debasing of values, whether through the brutalising of the feelings or through their cheap and sentimental stimulation.

A sense that contemporary culture is in a bad way, that we live in a society whose values, even when glamorised and nickel plated, are shoddy, rotten and inhumane—this is indeed a valuable and essential insight which all progressive people share.

Raymond Williams's Contribution

Raymond Williams seems to me to have made a contribution to this subject which has a number of valuable positive features:

(i) The historical side of his work, the examination of the attitudes of various thinkers and writers during the last hundred and fifty years, is by and large very useful. One may quarrel with particular assessments (the emphasis on Burke, the treatment of Matthew Arnold), but the general effect is to provide a valuable survey of changing attitudes to the relation of culture to society which enriches our appreciation of the progressive aspects of our heritage and provides a useful critique of a number of influential contemporary figures such as F. R. Leavis. I think, as I have hinted, that Williams tends to show an excessive respect for some of these established figures—T. S. Eliot for one, and even George Orwell—but that is not the main point here.

(ii) As I have suggested in discussing *Border Country*, Raymond Williams shows a certain basic feeling and respect for the working class and its problems which is valuable. In this his starting point may be compared with Richard Hoggart's, but it seems to me that Williams is altogether more objective and analytical, less sentimental and vague than Hoggart and more aware of the importance of work and the social relationships emerging from the productive processes. So that, whereas the working-class values which Hoggart stresses seem to be based on nothing much but an instinctive human decency and a vague traditional solidarity associated with the family (as though family solidarity were not also an important phenomenon in ruling-class and peasant life), Williams does have a sense of the basic importance of exploitation in determining the nature of working-class values.

(iii) His insistence on a broad, inclusive view of culture—culture as a "way of life" and not as the trimmings, the icing on the cake—though it has, as I shall suggest later, its weaknesses, is also a genuine strength. For it enables him to see culture as indissolubly bound up with human progress. "The analysis of culture," he writes, "is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life" (*L.R.* p. 41). This leads to a rejection of all forms of aestheticism, any attempt to place the criteria

of judgment in cultural matters outside man and his needs and development. It also leads to a very deep sense of the inter-relatedness of all experience and activity. It is Raymond Williams's view, for instance, that if we are to discuss working-class culture we must look not just at formal artistic productions by workers but at such achievements as the building of trade unions. This view, though I think it leads him to some wrong conclusions, is certainly, in the 1960's, far more fruitful and far more progressive in its effects than most contemporary approaches to culture.

(iv) On a number of specific topics, Williams's thinking is most penetrating and helpful. I find it hard to imagine the Marxist who would not find his own thinking enriched by a careful reading of Chapter III of *The Long Revolution*, entitled "Individuals and Societies", in which the whole important and difficult problem of the relation of the individual to society and vice versa is discussed. Here, for example, is Raymond Williams on Individualism as an historical phenomenon:

"In England, from Hobbes to the Utilitarians, a variety of systems share a common starting-point: man as a bare human being, 'the individual', is the logical starting-point of psychology, ethics and politics. It is rare, in this tradition, to start from the fact that man is born into relationships. The abstraction of the bare human being, as a separate substance, is ordinarily taken for granted. In other systems of thinking, the community would be the axiom, and individual man the derivative. Here individual man is the axiom, and society the derivative. . . . The whole Liberal tradition, following from this, begins with the individual and his rights and, judging society as an arrangement to ensure these abstract rights, argues normally for only the necessary minimum of government" (*The Long Revolution*, pp. 76-77).

Now it is true that Williams never makes unequivocally the essential point that this individualist tradition arises out of and is dependent on the ascendancy of the capitalist mode of production (though he would, of course, affirm a significant relationship between the two); but in practice he assumes that it does, for the whole structure of his historical approach is based on the change from capitalist to socialist society. His long revolution, despite implicit and explicit demurs, is, in fact, the socialist revolution or it is nothing.

(v) Marxists will tend to find the final chapters of both *Culture and Society* and *The Long Revolution*, in which Williams surveys the contemporary scene, the most superficial and least valuable parts of his books. Yet there are

numerous questions raised in these chapters, especially in *The Long Revolution*, which progressive people can certainly not afford to brush aside. The whole problem, for instance, of the organisation of the arts in a socialist society is a most important one, and the experiences to date of existing socialist societies are neither so close to our own (no socialist country has yet had to face the problem of what to do about a capitalist press anything like as powerful or all-pervasive as our own) nor so unqualifiedly successful that we can afford to imagine that we have already a blueprint to work on. What unfortunately mars Raymond Williams's treatment of these problems is his apparent ignoring of the real political difficulties involved. Are his proposals intended as relevant to the present social set-up with a Tory or right-wing Labour government? If so, one can only say they don't stand a cat in hell's chance of implementation. Or are they designed for the consideration of a government well set on a programme of socialist construction? If so, then what is involved (and Williams, so conscious of the interaction of things, should not find this hard to grasp) is a total programme of social transformation, based on a consistent attack on the exploiting class, in the context of which the general tone and studied moderation of Williams's proposals must seem somewhat out of key. Perhaps this is to be seen as one aspect of a general weakness of Raymond Williams's approach: he talks of a revolution; but what a revolution, short or long (and the time factor is not the point at issue between him and Marxism) actually implies in practical political and human terms fails to emerge in convincing terms from his books.

A Marxist Criticism

There are a number of weaknesses in Raymond Williams's approach which, while welcoming the many good aspects of his work, it is necessary to criticise.

(i) *A general abstractness of approach emerging not only in the argument, but in Williams's overall style and presentation.*

I do not think the indigestible, bureaucratic style which make his two theoretical books so difficult to read is a mere matter of presentation which can be divorced from the content. Raymond Williams can write very well. Not only does he do so, most of the time, in *Border Country*, but in *The Long Revolution* the turgid prose will suddenly change and come to life when he ceases to deal in abstractions and writes from experience. The passage in the last chapter of *The Long Revolution* (p. 306 ff.) on "man-

agement", for instance, comes to life in this way and the sudden vividness expresses not just a more personal involvement but a sudden full recognition of the class forces and processes involved which most of the chapter lacks. What a bourgeois critic might well single out as the least objective passage in the chapter is in fact the *most* objective, the deepest in its analysis, and it is deep precisely because the author's partisan class-feelings are engaged.

I think there is a significant moral here. Most of the time Raymond Williams seems to feel obliged to adopt an academic and, at the same time, somewhat hectoring "above-the-struggle" approach, just as bureaucrats do. And this is not just because he feels that such an approach will make his books more respectable and respect-worthy; it is because, to a large extent, he sees the world like that. Like Matthew in *Border Country*, he thinks he can get to the truth and help the working class, by becoming, not a working-class politician, but a sociologist. And sociology he envisages in essentially bourgeois terms as somehow or other above the class struggle.

This is what lies behind the tendency in his work to be concerned more with the meaning of words than with the struggles behind those meanings. That is why it is not so much "culture" (even within his own definition of a "way of life") as the *idea* of culture that interests him. And when he comes to the question of class it is at the *idea* of class that he gets stuck.

(ii) *The idea of class.*

"Behind any description of the patterns of our economy and of our political and social life lie ways of thinking about class", he writes (p. 316). It is a significant sentence. Why, first of all, the words "the patterns of"? What does it add but verbiage and the very verbiage which has become the jargon and stock-in-trade of bourgeois sociology? Secondly, what makes the concept of "class" indeed lie behind any description of our economy and political and social life is not a way (or ways) of thinking about it, but the fact that class is there. Now it is true that the sentence quoted continues: "which in Britain in the 1960's seem exceptionally uncertain and confused", so that one thinks for a moment that Raymond Williams may be going to end the uncertainty and confusion and offer a precise definition of class. Not a bit of it. The words "ways of thinking about" are not there by accident; they permeate the whole approach. The question of what people think about class is never separated from what class actually is. And the nearest Raymond Williams ever gets

to an objective description is the sentence

"The fact is that we are still in a stage of transition from a social stratification based on birth to one based on money and actual position" (p. 318).

Social Reality Obscured

I am sorry to have to put it so sharply but almost every sort of sloppy vagueness upon which the ruling class relies for the obscuring of actual social reality is embedded in that sentence; it has just enough quarter- and half-truths to give the illusion of a description, while, in fact, it says nothing precise, nothing that stands up to objective analysis. What "social stratification" implies in terms of actual objective relationship to the productive forces of the economy or the operation of state power is not defined, what is meant by the phrase "actual position" is entirely vague. All this is, of course, typical of contemporary bourgeois sociology, one of the most bogus and at the same time pretentious types of pseudo-science ever to emerge from the mind of man. What is distressing is to find a writer of the calibre and sympathies of Raymond Williams falling for this half-baked stuff. In his capacities either as literary critic or practising socialist he would not, one feels certain, fall for a moment into such confused and confusing vagueness and ambiguity. Williams, in his chapter on Marxism in *Culture and Society*, accuses Marxists of certain confusions and, indeed, makes a number of interesting and important points which it behoves Marxists to consider and attempt to clarify. But nothing I have come across in Marxist writing is as confused or as question-begging as Raymond Williams when he begins to generalise on questions of economics and social analysis.

This failure to define or really get to grips with the nature of class division is, perhaps, the greatest single weakness, not only of Raymond Williams's approach, but of the current discussion of culture and society in general (John Berger being a notable exception). It is not that critics like Williams are on a certain level unaware of class distinction; the basic problem is that they make no distinction between class and social stratification or caste. Now the whole point about class is that it refers not to mere differences in way of life, income, social habits, etc.; such differences may be of great significance and interest but they are not what is meant by class. Class is determined *solely* by the question of relationship to the productive forces: the working class is a class not because it works or because it is poor or lives in certain districts, or thinks of itself as the working class. It is a

class because its members—those who sell their labour-power for wages—stand in a common relationship to the means of production.

Now it is no use for the non-Marxist to argue that this is merely the *Marxist* definition of class. Class is a Marxist concept. It was Marx who formulated the theory of class and class struggle. This does not, of course, prove that it is right. But it does mean that attempts to re-define class in different ways and then to use the word as though it were what Marx was referring to is merely to confuse matters. If a biologist wishes to formulate a different theory of biological development from Darwin's, it is not helpful if he calls it the theory of evolution.

(iii) *The definition of culture.*

I have mentioned that Raymond Williams's broad, inclusive view of culture as "way of life" has its positive side; but it also involves a weakness which links up with the question of definition of class. All social activities, including art, politics, etc., Williams insists in *The Long Revolution* have to be seen as interrelated but "particular and contemporary forms of human energy" (p. 45). So far so good. "It is, then, not a question of relating the art to the society, but of studying all the activities and their inter-relations *without any concession of priority to any one of them we may choose to abstract*" [my italics]. In the first part of this sentence, Raymond Williams is making a valid point in that he is guarding against a passive or mechanistic view of social development and insisting quite rightly that the relation between art and society is a dialectical one. But the italicised phrase shows that he has taken this valid argument to a self-defeating point by refusing to see any social activity as ultimately more basic than any other. In other words he is using the dialectical approach within a vacuum. And this criticism is not confined to a chance sentence but is fundamental to the approach, and links up with the rejection of the theory of basis and superstructure in *Culture and Society*.

A Difficult Problem

There are two possible lines of criticism of this mistake. On the one hand one might simply argue that it is wrong, i.e. not in accordance with the facts. This would involve demonstrating the necessity for a materialist approach and philosophy on scientific and philosophical grounds and obviously a review-article is not the place for that. Alternatively, one might make the point (at greater length than is possible here) that Raymond Williams's insistence on "parity" for all social activities and his rejection of the material

basis and the relationships arising from it as indeed basic, is, in fact, inconsistent with the underlying assumptions behind his work. For *The Long Revolution* which he writes about, and whose image dominates his work, is, in fact, a social revolution in the Marxist sense, based on the development of the productive forces and on changes in social relationships which are neither fortuitous nor explained in idealist terms. Take away the basic Marxist concepts and the whole structure of Raymond Williams's apprehension of historical reality would collapse.

What happens when you use "culture" as a term synonymous with "social reality" as a whole and reject the theory that material development is basic and, though not in a mechanistic non-dialectical way, *prior to ideology*, is not only that you cease to see ideology in class terms, but also that you deny yourself the means of effectively *changing* the culture you criticise. To take an obvious example, the problem of the commercially controlled mass media. Now one may make a very full and interesting analysis of the precise ways in which commercial culture affects people's attitudes and thoughts and one can also rightly make the point that the sheer size of the public involved in, say, television, raises cultural problems which, in any type of society, including a socialist one, are new and tricky and need a good deal of investigation and thought. But none of this alters the fact that the basic thing about commercial culture is that it is commercial, i.e. produced for private profit. And no amount of sociological or cultural analysis or discussion alters the equally basic fact that if you want to alter or get rid of commercial culture you must take the control out of the hands of the profit-makers. This is basic; and we use the word not because it corresponds with a philosophic distinction drawn by Marx a hundred years ago, but because it is obviously true. No surveys, no propaganda, no high-minded preaching, no legislation even, will seriously affect the nature of commercial culture, except legislation which strikes at its commercial basis. To obscure this simple fact and the obvious conclusions that follow from it by refusing to admit that the economic base is indeed basic is to cut off one's nose to spite one's face.

This point once admitted it becomes obvious that any satisfactory approach to culture must, while avoiding the pitfalls of mechanism and undialectical thinking, recognise priorities and see culture as a part of what Marx called the superstructure. No Marxist who has given the matter serious thought imagines that this con-

clusion is more than a beginning. But it is the necessary beginning.

(iv) "*State Control*".

There is a passage towards the end of *The Long Revolution* which pinpoints the cultural political dilemma of Raymond Williams and many others on the left today.

"What is the alternative to capitalism? Socialism. What is a socialist culture? State control. There are many good liberals and many anxious socialists who draw back if this is the prospect" (p. 339).

And that this is indeed so was recently shown by the discussion in the *New Statesman* of Richard Wollheim's pamphlet on *Socialism and Culture*. What every contributor welcomed in this pamphlet was its rejection of any sort of state control or patronage.

A Difficult Problem

This is a genuinely difficult problem. No one, including the Communist, wants to deny either that it is difficult or that it has in existing socialist societies sometimes been bungled. But it has also to be said that almost all current discussion of the problem from the left runs away from it. Raymond Williams runs away less than most. Yet even in the way he formulates the question can be seen a tendency to capitulate to the liberals.

One has the space only to make a couple of points. The first is to suggest that the problem cannot be met by pretending it need not exist. The phrase "state control" is not a satisfactory description of the working of a socialist state (it is, of course, a Tory phrase, deliberately playing on people's fears); but the fact remains that a socialist state by its very nature exercises a degree of control and responsibility which in capitalist society is deliberately left in the hands of irresponsible individuals. A socialist state *does* have an attitude to culture. So, in fact, does the capitalist state: to encourage as far as humanly possible the sort of culture, the sort of thinking and feeling, which softens people in directions useful to the capitalist class. A socialist state, on the contrary, quite consciously has to discourage capitalist ideas and culture and equally consciously to encourage a genuine, popular culture. What it does and does not do in the furtherance of such a policy is, of course, a matter on which different opinions are possible among socialists. But to imagine that a socialist state could or should not have such a general policy with regard to culture is to be quite unrealistic.

Raymond Williams at one point (*Culture and Society*, p. 283) quotes Lenin:

"Every artist . . . has a right to create freely

according to his ideals, independent of anything. Only, of course, we Communists cannot stand with our arms folded and let chaos develop in any direction it may."

"There is no 'of course' about it," is Williams's comment; but I think there is. It seems to me clear that in a responsible society based on co-operative effort for the common good the leadership cannot abjure the responsibility of having an attitude on *all* questions involving society's development, and that to imagine that cultural matters can or should be excluded from such consideration is foolish. This is not to deny that the problem of just what leadership in such spheres as cultural development involves is a complex one. To imagine that the culture of a society can be helped by a rigid laying down of the law on artistic matters or by a narrow and puritanical approach to cultural problems is wrong; but equally wrong is the belief that a healthy popular culture develops spontaneously, or that the artist, alone of the citizens of a socialist society, should not be subject to the normal laws and obligations of such a society.

(v) *The Long Revolution.*

One of the inadequacies in Raymond Williams's books and in New Left political and social thinking in general appears to me to be a certain unconscious insularity which prevents Britain from being seen in a world context. Certainly one can sympathise with the insistence on the development of a *national* culture and a proper stress on the specific national traditions and heritage of our society. It is not the absence of a slick cosmopolitan veneer that one regrets, but rather the lack of realisation that the revolution under consideration cannot be isolated as a British phenomenon, nor its development in Britain understood without reference to the social transformation of the world as a whole.

For one of the most important features of the socialist revolution is that it is, unlike previous revolutions, international, with the whole of humanity as its province.

Britain and the World

Now the point here is that in the 1960's it is exceptionally difficult to see the way Britain is going without being aware of the way the world is going. One of the peculiar features of the Western European capitalist countries at this stage in world history is that outward appearances are exceptionally deceptive. The deep internal economic and social crises which beset these countries are not always, for a variety of reasons (not least important of which is their position as colonial powers), obvious to empirical observation. It is, for instance, almost impossible to give at all a deep analysis of the political attitudes of the British people from a study of electoral figures. It seems to me an underlying weakness of Raymond Williams's consideration of what he calls the Long Revolution that it is, in the limiting sense of the word, empirical.

This is what is really the matter with Williams's concept of culture as a "way of life" comprising, without any guiding principle of cause and effect, everything in social life. And this is why the idea that what is wrong with Britain today is our culture is, though true, not always the most helpful emphasis. For the implication that the revolution of our time is at bottom a cultural revolution and will be primarily effected by cultural change is a false implication and can easily encourage progressive people to despise and sheer away from political action. And yet, without the material changes and consequent changes in relationships which only political action can bring about, the broader cultural problems can never be seriously affected, let alone solved.

The New Man in Soviet Society¹

G. Smirnov

NO matter what the self-appointed "Russian experts" may say, common sense will tell anyone with an open mind that the astonishing deeds of the Soviet people took the utmost energy, will and talent. The objective observer cannot help seeing that behind the remarkable military exploits and victories, the incredibly rapid economic progress, the sputniks and luniks, the first manned cosmic flight, the wonderful art, the athletic achievements of the Soviet Union stands the New Man of our new society.

That observer cannot help asking: Who is this New Man? Why does he act as he does? What are the inner springs of his behaviour?

To be sure, Soviet man is not an abstraction with a prescribed number of virtues evenly distributed among model citizens. Socialism does not rub out the differences between people, their limitless spiritual variety, their multiformity of talents and abilities, aims and inclinations. Just as no two individuals can be exactly alike physically, so in his spiritual make-up every Soviet person is a distinct entity. It could hardly be otherwise; the story of the formation of every individual character is a distinct, inimitable life story. Among the general factors which shape the outlook and character of the individual, there are also distinctly individual, peculiar factors which leave their ineffaceable stamp on his character.

The way those qualities are interwoven with such inborn qualities as his temperament, capabilities, inclinations, etc.—are what shape up in the end to his personality with all its merits and demerits.

Since we are talking about Soviet man as a new social phenomenon, however, the important thing for us is not the heterogeneity of human traits, but what is basic and common to all Soviet people, i.e. what constitutes this social phenomenon. "The essence of man," Marx said, "is the sum total of all his social relations." Soviet man is the result of the development of socialist social relations, their direct expression and most important outcome.

The Individual in Society

What does that mean with respect to the position of the individual in society?

Socialism has put an end to the division of people into exploiters and exploited, the latter obliged to work for the former. Soviet man, therefore, does not have the feeling that there is a boss over him empowered to hire or fire him, to show him mercy or to punish him depending on his profit or whim. Under socialism, everybody has to work, and the measure of a man's position in society, as well as the source of his well-being, is his own work. That creates an objective basis for real equality between the members of society and encourages profound respect for the individual.

Secondly, under social ownership the direct aim of production is to satisfy the needs of the members of society. In other words, under socialism for the first time in history the public interest becomes the interest of each individual member of society. As a result, no man can say to any other man "It's none of your business" without breaking one of the main laws of socialism: "One for all, and all for one."

Thirdly, socialism creates favourable material conditions for the satisfaction of the personal requirements of the individual and development of his abilities by eradicating unemployment, providing broad educational opportunities and a free system of medical care for all, and ensuring full employment of the population, and the steady improvement of its standard of life by continual wage rises. The life of man is no longer haunted by the spectre of need and insecurity.

All these factors combined, and particularly the equality of all members of Soviet society both in relation to the means of production as well as politically—i.e. the community of interests typical of socialist relations—are what have changed the spiritual make-up, the whole psychology of man, and in a very fundamental way.

The new conditions of life, besides retailoring the social nature of man, have also changed his relation to the world around him.

They have engendered a spirit of revolutionary enthusiasm and extraordinary solidarity and activity among the working people, especially the industrial proletariat. The main quality that from the first has distinguished the foremost citizens of the young socialist state is concern for the common good, the interests of all. That has been the practical foundation of communist construction, in the process of

¹ From *Kommunist*, No. 7, 1961.

which the character of the new man has taken shape and developed.

This, essentially, is the secret of the character of Soviet man: his outlook and interests have become infinitely broader than those of other people. He has taken to heart the problems which engage the attention and energies of the whole country and made them his vital concern: problems of the collective life of his place of employment, of the town where he lives. In other words, the interests and problems of the whole country are as much a matter of concern to him (and sometimes even more so) than his personal or family problems. Such is the source of the spiritual beauty of Soviet man. His whole inner life is illumined, so to say, by the noble ideals of society. Many of his wonderful qualities, as his devotion to the ideals of communism, thirst for knowledge, creative attitude to labour, discipline and good organisation, patriotism and internationalism, confidence in the future, are to be attributed to that. One does not need much to live only for oneself: but to live both for oneself and for others takes many fine qualities and much energy and ability. There is great truth in the saying that a man's wealth is measured not by how much he has, but by how much he gives to others.

Probably the most revealing indication of man's changing nature is his new attitude to work. Before socialism, work was recognised as a thing of inspiration and creativity only for members of a few of the "happier" professions, as writers, scientists, and artists. But for most people in capitalist society, and especially for industrial labourers, work has never been more than a means of supporting themselves and their families.

Contrary to that state of affairs, socialism has given the broad masses of farmers and workers every opportunity to engage in creative labour. The great social significance of productive labour has been publicly and officially acclaimed for the first time. Our day-by-day toil has ceased to be our narrow personal concern and become a form of social activity demonstrating the individual's interest in and mastery of his particular task. That is irrefutably substantiated by the popularity of the socialist emulation movement all through the history of the Soviet Union. It is a movement which expresses the concern of the workers and farmers of the country for the growth of socialised production.

The Role of the Masses

Production is only one of the large spheres in which the individual's attitude to social problems manifests itself, although it is a very important sphere, to be sure. That same attitude is reflected in the active part the wide masses play in self-government. Soviet democracy ensures the direct, concrete participation of millions of ordinary

people in the solution of the intricate and important problems of Soviet society as a whole, and of each collective separately.

The mass character of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which is leading and directing the progress of our society, bears out the above premise. The Party now has a membership of almost 9,500,000. There are other civic organisations of the same mass character. They include the Young Communist League of the Soviet Union, with a membership of 18 million, and the trade unions, with their 56 million members. Hundreds of thousands of deputies have been elected to the local Soviets. During election campaigns, between 14 million and 15 million people work as canvassers and organisers. Millions of Soviet people belong to the various permanent committees of the Soviets of Working Peoples' Deputies. There are also millions of people, most of them workers, active in the regular production meetings and other forms of trade union work. They belong to factory committees and subsidiary commissions; they work as voluntary controllers in catering and trading undertakings, and so on. To the above we must add the millions of activists in the collective farmers' and consumers' co-operatives, the members of the voluntary brigades, the comradely courts, the voluntary athletic societies, the army, air force and navy societies, the All-Union Society for the Diffusion of Political and Scientific Knowledge, the scientific-technical societies, etc. Tens of millions of Soviet people take an active part in discussions of the vital problems of social development. It is no exaggeration to say, therefore, that the majority of the gainfully-employed population of our country, as well as a large number of pensioners, housewives and students, are participating in civic work on a voluntary basis. Of course, they do not all give themselves to that work with the same degree of activity or steadiness.

But if we also keep in mind that many important questions are settled by the general meetings of the working people at their places of employment or residence, it appears that the overwhelming majority of the adult population of this country has been drawn into civic work.

The salient feature of the Soviet people, their acceptance of the public interest as their own personal interest, originates with particular individuals, and presupposes co-operation with others. Naturally, that trait also expresses itself in solicitude for people, and in what they expect from others.

Of course, there are things that belong entirely to the realm of the personal. There are interests, connected with the satisfaction of the individual's material and spiritual needs, the development of his energies and abilities, the preservation of his life, that are personal by their very nature. These personal interests must be treated with every respect

and consideration. Solicitude for the happiness of each (not of the few, but of all the members of society) is the underlying principle of socialist society. But the personal never remains just that and no more. It is always connected in one way or another with society: personal interests take shape and are satisfied on the social plane, and personal acts, motivated by the desire for the satisfaction of personal needs, often have social consequences.

At the same time, the sphere of personal interest does not stop at considerations of personal well-being. His position in the family and the collective, class and national affiliations, and the like, all help to shape the ethical character of the individual, investing him with a sense of duty to his family, obligations on the job, class solidarity, and so on. There has always been a bridge between personal interest and the interest of some community, even before the advent of socialism. Socialism removed the antagonism between social groups, thanks to which the interest of the individual and the interests of society were directly linked.

Communist ideology does not reject the best which human relations achieved over the course of previous history. On the contrary, it fully accepts such noble human motivations as inspired creative labour, love, friendship, honour, courage, stamina, etc. What is more, we might venture to say that communist ideology would probably not have arisen at all if mankind had not created that whole body of beautiful and noble traditions worth fighting for and defending against the destructive forces of the old moribund system, and if the social forces ready to fight for it had not already appeared on the scene. It is precisely because communist ideology organically embraces all the most humane principles that it is so absolutely intolerant of everything that oppresses, insults, degrades human dignity.

Another point that must be stressed is that the objective coincidence of social and personal interest is not enough to make everybody accept the social automatically as their own, personal interest. Nor does the fact that social and personal interests coincide mean that they are identical or that the social interest is always, under all circumstances, the same as personal interest. Take the instances when the Soviet people have agreed, for the sake of the social interest, to limit their personal interests, to make sacrifices, even to lay down their lives. In such cases the social interest obviously takes the upper hand over personal interest and subordinates the latter to itself. That happens because socialism has brought the working people tremendous benefits, and the appreciation of those benefits is uppermost in their minds. Further, if the social interest were identical with personal interest, there would be no need to inculcate an understanding of these social interests, a sense of duty, patriotism and collectivism

in people. Yet that is necessary, because survivals of the proprietary psychology, of individualism, do persist even under socialism, and the "birthmarks" of bourgeois society are bound to make themselves felt for a certain period of time.

The "Birthmarks"

Occasionally, when confronted with some flagrant violation of communist ethics, we hear people exclaim with surprise: "Where do these law-breakers, who have committed such contemptible acts, come from? All of them grew up in Soviet times, were educated in Soviet schools, read the same books, saw the same films as the rest of us. Yet how differently they act!"

Socialism has scored great victories, as a result of which our country has entered a period of accelerated communist construction. The fundamental social and economic changes, the great educational work of the Party have been crowned by a historical victory: the emergence of the New Man, to whom the common cause of building communism has become the personal cause of his life. That cannot close our eyes to the fact, however, that in socialist society such disgusting reminders of the past as stealing, bribe-taking, speculation, hooliganism, parasitism, philistine indifference to the common cause still occur. These phenomena spring from the desire of certain elements to live at the expense of others, from their utter contempt for the human dignity and self-respect of others. The criterion of all their acts is: only what is good for me counts. In other words—individualism.

Individualism is a manifestation of bourgeois ideology in socialist conditions, a hangover of the past, a "birthmark". It is absolutely foreign to the nature of socialism, and stands in irreconcilable contradiction to collectivism, which is the keynote of the socialist ideology. Such survivals of the past as individualism have no place in socialist relations.

Sometimes the view is voiced that it's time we stopped talking about "survivals". But this is wrong theoretically and harmful politically, for it disarms the Soviet people in the fight against bourgeois attitudes and ideas.

Marx and Lenin pointed out that socialism would continue to bear the birthmarks of the old society from which it sprang in all respects, economically, morally and mentally. How is that principle of Marx and Lenin to be understood? Socialism was built by people who grew up under capitalist conditions, with a definite background of knowledge, ideas, concepts, moral principles, habits, and ways. Socialist society has historically absorbed people from different social groups—workers, farmers (kulaks or rich farmers, middle and poor farmers, and farm labourers), the petty bourgeois strata of the towns (artisans and traders), intellectuals (with their in-

numerable gradations). All of them had to be re-educated and educated by the working class and its Communist Party. There is hardly any need to explain that the development of a socialist consciousness proceeded at a varying pace among these different social groups. While the psychology of the working class, its social attitudes, sympathies and antipathies may be considered the soil on which that socialist consciousness was nurtured, the same can hardly be said of the peasantry and old intelligentsia or other middle strata with their intrinsic petty bourgeois psychology and well-known duality of outlook. Thus, while the working class took naturally to a socialist outlook, easily discarded elements of bourgeois mentality, and drew strength from its class proletarian psychology, the petty bourgeois strata, on the other hand, had to overcome both their bourgeois ideology and their bourgeois psychology.

Another important point is that different forms of social consciousness reflect the changes taking place in the economic status of people in varying degree. Their political consciousness is always the first to change under all circumstances, inasmuch as it is the direct reflection of their economic interests. Under socialism common economic interests spring up among all the working people, and their political views correspond to these common interests, as reflected in the political consolidation of Soviet society, in the unanimity and activity with which the people support the policies of the Communist Party, and in the absence of political struggle against the Soviet state.

Changing political ideas are basic to the assimilation of other forms of socialist consciousness: its philosophical, scientific, and artistic forms, as well as of the new communist ethic. This process is a much slower one, however, as the assimilation of the above forms of consciousness is not dictated by the same kind of immediate necessity that gave rise to the new political consciousness. Moreover, their assimilation is more intricate, and calls for a marked rise in the general educational level of the population and for persevering educational work. And all that, of course, takes time.

Thus, as a consequence of the social heterogeneity of society and the specific circumstances surrounding the appearance of the different forms of social consciousness, people attain to communist awareness at varying rates and degrees. The wide masses acquire political understanding much more readily than they can the new principles of the communist ethic or progressive aesthetic tastes. In other words, the consciousness of some people lags behind the forms of social life.

In life we know of cases when a man who has proved his devotion to socialism and readiness to lay down his life for his country with gun in hand

commits amoral acts, or takes a passive attitude to the misdemeanours of hooligans, scoundrels, and the like. Such a man may try to hide behind the seemingly harmless excuse, "what business is this of mine, anyway?" His political awareness clashes with his individualism, his laxity in everyday life, which in turn may be attributable to his instability of character, or lack of will-power, or the insufficient education of the moral and ethical qualities of the person in question.

Bourgeois ideas, having found their way into socialist society through certain representatives of the older generation, sometimes take hold of the youth. We must not forget, too, that bourgeois ideas are fostered by influences from the capitalist world outside. In isolated cases, due to the concatenation of various circumstances, the influence of the old ethics proves stronger than the influence of socialist ideas, or counteracts the latter. The notion that only those who were born and raised before 1917 or at the time of the New Economic Policy (N.E.P.) harbour the old attitudes and conceptions is certainly naive to say the least.

We have all met with families that seem to form stifling little philistine islands. All they seem to care about is their own well-being. Don't forget that there are youngsters in those families. Now, all the thoughts and acts of such people are directed towards ensuring their own welfare. That is all that matters to them. If such people make their way to high positions, they seriously harm the common cause. They are the soil from which bureaucrats, careerists, and fawning toadies spring. They do harm not only because they disappoint the trust of the Soviet people, but also because their example has a corrupting effect on those around them.

The Heritage of the Past

As we said before, the heritage of the past manifests itself not only in the ideological and psychological domains; it also embraces phenomena of a social and economic nature.

First there is the question of the low production level we inherited from tsarist Russia. To overcome their retardation and build up a heavy industry the Soviet people had to economise in every way. You can readily see that we could not satisfy some of our vital needs for consumer goods and dwelling space as we would have liked. Then there was the terrible damage our country sustained in the wars forced on it, which also retarded our production growth. The shortage of some consumer goods was and in some places is still being exploited to speculative ends, feeding the greed of negative elements. Unsatisfactory housing conditions, for their part, have also been an obstacle at times to the correct communist upbringing of the working people.

Socialism has done away with the contradictions

between the towns and the villages that we inherited from the past. But we are still confronted with a survival of the past in the way the countryside still lags behind the towns in the level of industrialised labour culture and living conditions. Due to the comparatively low productivity of labour, the socialised sectors of the collective farms do not as yet fully satisfy all the farmers' food needs. Therefore, the farmers still work individual plots, and part of the means of production are their private property. If educational work lags and control is weakened, the personal plots of the collective farmers may exceed the proper size, and be used by certain elements for purposes of individual gain to the detriment of the socialised economy and, therefore, of the interests of socialism.

Another throw-back socialism inherited from the past is the contradiction between mental and physical work. This contradiction was wiped out by the great social changes and cultural revolution that took place in our country. The main differences between mental and physical work are rapidly disappearing. Nevertheless, the past still reveals itself in the lower educational level among the bulk of manual workers as compared to mental workers, especially in the countryside. There is hardly any need to point out that a low educational and cultural level are favourable to the perpetuation of superstitions and religious prejudices in the minds of some people.

These are all consequences of the past which people cannot avoid or escape in building communism. While they are not hangovers of bourgeois economic relations as such, they reflect the economic immaturity of the initial phase of communism, i.e. socialism, as compared to the higher phase of communism. While they do not generate such survivals of the past, they are the conditions which may foster their revival. It is quite likely that they are more apparent wherever communist educational work is neglected and control over the observation of the laws and principles of socialism is relaxed by state bodies and society as a whole, where the norms of socialist democracy are violated, and so on.

Everyone's Concern

Communist construction must become the concern of every Soviet citizen, yes—every man and woman, and not just the majority, as is the case now. In analysing the general problem of the formation of the new man during the period of accelerated communist upbuilding, the Communist Party has set itself the concrete task of reaching every citizen with its educational work. This is not only a question of embracing all the working people with its mass political and educational work, though that task alone is tremendous in scope and importance. The point is to reach each and everyone, to stimulate

every citizen to become an active and class-conscious builder of communism.

One can bring up a man to be physically healthy and well informed, and yet indifferent to the interests of the collective and of society. Such a man will remain an egoist and live only for himself. Communist education pursues a different goal: to make the individual regard his work as service to his fellows, to society; to help him find moral gratification from the sense of working for others. All our educational and economic and mass political work must be designed to instil the feeling that each of us is an inseparable member of the great army of builders of communism, no matter what our occupation or profession may be—making machine tools, mining coal, writing books, treating the sick, evolving new varieties of wheat, or driving a train.

That is no easy task. Its solution requires a great effort, a search for new forms, methods and means of conducting educational work. These new forms must yet be found. Some of them have already been discovered. They are the Communist Work Teams, the production meetings, the universities of culture and advanced experience, comradely courts, volunteer brigades, and so on.

Varied as the forms and methods of communist educational work may be, its basic task remains throughout the encouragement of the voluntary social activities of the masses. The aim is for every citizen to be a member of a certain collective and perform some function there, aside from his immediate production task, some task bearing on the administration and regulation of the life of that collective, or of the village, town, region, republic, where he lives. V. I. Lenin regarded the drawing of literally all members of society into social activity as the main trend of the political development of society towards communism. He spoke of the "transition through the Soviet state to the gradual destruction of the state, by systematically drawing ever greater numbers of citizens and then literally all citizens, into direct, day-by-day performance of their share of the burden of running the state" (Vol. 27, p. 130).

Why is the question put that way?

Because active participation in self-government tends to develop a wider outlook in people, a deeper understanding of the state, its general aims, its tasks and the methods of solving them; it teaches people to respect the generally accepted rules and standards of conduct and to intelligently combine their personal aspirations and wishes with the interests of society.

The abilities and merits of the individual manifest themselves best of all in the collective. People derive profound satisfaction when they have a part in the solution of various problems. That is the source of the creative activity of the wide masses, of their unshakeable belief in the ideals of communism and

their firmness in solving the tasks of communist construction.

Although the masses even now are extremely active in the Soviet Union, we have not drawn absolutely all the working people into self-government as yet. We often observe this picture: life teems in some factory or institution; there are evening parties and get-togethers of the staff, excursions to museums and theatres, and outings, and sports contests; there are regular meetings and conferences, and so on. The organisers of these activities are up to their ears in work. Their reports on their work are, indeed, interesting. And yet only a part of the collective takes part in all these activities, while the rest stand on the sidelines, and are described as "passive".

Since the bulk of the workers are not always drawn into social work to the extent that they should be, the active members of the collective are too overburdened with work. A strange law of inertia seems to operate, as a result of which one and the same person is elected to many different bodies. A certain worker at a Moscow plant complains that he has six different civic jobs: he is a member of the factory trade union committee, chairman or steward of his shop committee, chairman of the housing and living conditions committee of the factory committee, member of the shop Party Bureau, a People's Assessor and member of a comradesly court. There is the head of a faculty in one of our colleges who has nineteen such extra jobs. These examples are not exceptional. Aside from the fact that such a load taxes the health of the individuals concerned, it is not good for the work. How can one person do so many jobs satisfactorily? The work, of course, suffers, certain questions are not regulated on time, and that presents an obstacle to development. In the end people suffer.

Such overloading may have been excusable in the past, when we lacked people with the proper training.

But now, when the people of our country have grown tremendously in the cultural, political and other respects, the practice has no justification. We have at our disposal truly limitless reserves from which to choose, to nominate people for social work. As soon as we did away with the practice of letting one person hold many paid jobs, for instance, we discovered that it was no longer justifiable under the new conditions. Similarly we have every reason to believe that we have at last reached a stage when elected civic posts can also be more widely distributed. Undoubtedly such a change would inject fresh life into our organisational work, fresh initiative and possibilities, and, above all, help to draw all the members of society into social activity.

Then, too, it is important to raise the role of the public at large and stimulate the activity of the masses, if only because that is essential to real wide-

spread control over the implementation of the principles and laws of socialism and communism. Hangovers of the past in the minds of people can only be overcome if control is effected by the masses themselves. No administrative bodies, no matter how good they are, or what fine state laws they rely on, can achieve effective control over the implementation of those laws and principles if they function without support from the masses. Only if the masses are active at all times and places in bringing to light infractions of the law and in punishing them will society be able to fully eliminate law-breaking.

Public Control

Life itself poses the question of increasing public control, especially control by Party organisations, over the work of the elective governing bodies and their functionaries. The political, economic and cultural life of the Soviet state is well covered by the issue of widespread information. Foreign observers also acknowledge the fact. Some of them, in fact, consider it the main reason for the interest of the Soviet people in public life. But the reason is not only because they are well informed; it goes much deeper into the very nature of the socialist system.

And yet, in spite of the issue of broad, systematic information covering the whole country and all the republics, regions, districts and undertakings, the fact remains that many workers in some enterprises have but the haziest idea of how their particular collective is coping with its state tasks. That happens by no means because such information is a state secret. It is simply the result of negligence. It particularly concerns information about the current activity of certain administrative functionaries. Due to the slackness of social control, some workers begin to forget their responsibility to the working people and to abuse the trust that has been placed in them.

Weak control on the part of the Party Committees over the activities of the bureaus and secretaries they elect explains the occurrence of criminal activity by some leaders, as was noted at the January Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

"One finds leaders who in the attempt to conceal their inactivity and create the impression that all is well take the criminal road of trying to deceive the state, stoop to eye-washing, falsification and other anti-state acts. They are not political organisers, but careerists, people who have crept into the Party under false pretences. They disgrace the Party. They should be excluded from the Party and put on trial."

Experience has shown that Party organisations and Party functionaries must interest themselves not only in the statistical results but also in the everyday practical work, the style of work of administrative bodies, and delve more deeply into the content

of the work of their staffs. In turn, such functionaries must continually inform the organisations by which they were elected about the character and results of their activity. That applies both to state organisations and to the leading bodies of civic organisations. Systematic information at meetings, the publication of reports on the activity of definite institutions, would further increase the activity of the working people, on the one hand, and the responsibility of the leading workers, on the other, for the job entrusted to them. That kind of close contact with people is useful to the leaders themselves and helps to educate them. After all, our best Party and economic workers grew up as ideological fighters for the interests of the people, they learned to understand the needs of the people, of the collective, and while directing the collective, to serve it, to combine and dovetail the interests of the collective and society at large.

As you know, one of the reasons why the state must be retained under socialism is that it is necessary to control the quantity of labour and the quantity of consumption. Yet we find that even when there is flagrant and open violation of the principle, and one man quite brazenly robs society, the question of where his riches have come from is not even raised. Speaking at the meeting of leading farmers of the non-black earth zone of the R.S.F.S.R., N. S. Khrushchov said:

“Let us not be formalists, comrades. Let’s ask such a worker quite plainly where he got the money to build his house. It’s time we gave thought, evidently, to the question of issuing laws which would provide that such houses be handed over to the collective farm for its benefit, for the benefit of society.”

Related to the above is the question of intensifying public control over the organisations which are connected in any way whatsoever with the distribution of material wealth. That is where we encounter

theft, embezzlement and other abuses which can only be remedied by combining administrative and broad civic control. A great many workers have been drawn into such control at the present time. Along trade union lines alone there are about 1,700,000 voluntary controllers who keep an eye on all forms of services to the public. Public control committees made up of representatives of the factory trade union committees and local or shop committees of the trade unions have been attached to trading organisations, the dining room and factory supply trusts. These committees, like the permanent committees of the executives of the Soviets of Working People’s Deputies, are doing important and useful work. But the control functions of the public must be extended still more. For instance, the work of trading organisations and dining rooms could be greatly improved if they were required to make regular reports to the public or representatives of the public. Such reports could come from both the heads of the above organisations and from the voluntary controllers attached to them.

There is no limit to the activities the public could engage in, to the extent to which it could increase its role and influence on all spheres of social life. The time is already ripe to pose the question more widely of letting the public take part in the controlling and auditing activity of the state, in the work of public recreational and cultural institutions, in the organisation of athletics, especially in the localities where the people live.

Thus, the development of the public activity of the masses and shaping of the character of the man of the future communist society are dialectically interconnected, and represent important aspects of the integrated process of communist construction. In this interaction the education of the individual, for whom communism should be his personal cause, appears as the main goal, while the development of social activity is the means to the achievement of that goal.

Discussion Contributions

On Capitalism's Economic Prospects

Michael McCreery

THE reasons for believing that "in the main the inflationary phase in the post-war period has now come to an end" are rather stronger than R. Palme Dutt's analysis would suggest. It can mislead to argue that "over the period of about the past forty years" there have been "more or less continuous rises in prices in all countries", in contrast to "the period of normal capitalism in the second half of the nineteenth century" when prices were "continually going down".

In fact, since the 1850's, prices have tended to rise during periods of rapid economic expansion and to fall during periods of comparative stagnation. This medium-term movement can be distinguished from the long-term movement, century by century, which has always been upward, and from the short-term movements accompanying the trade cycle. It might be likened to the ebb and flow of the tides, contrasting with a rise in the general level of the ocean on the one hand and the frequent rise and fall of waves on the other.

Thus, from 1852 there was a sharp upward movement of prices which continued, except for breaks in 1857 and 1866, until 1873. This was the period of prosperity resulting from Great Britain's monopoly position as workshop of the world. But in 1873 the great depression hit Britain as our main industrial rivals, Germany and the U.S.A., began to encroach for the first time upon our well-established positions in world markets. Intensified competition was accompanied by steadily falling prices, and this continued, except for one or two years of short-lived recovery, until 1896.

Competition was eased with the growth of Empire and capitalist penetration of vast areas of the underdeveloped world, and the period of imperial prosperity from 1896 to 1914 was once again characterised by generally rising prices. This price rise was extended by the inflation resulting from Government financial policies during the First World War. But with the crash of 1920 prices fell sharply, and continued to fall throughout that decade, and sharply again during the great crisis of the early 1930's. This period of falling prices, too, is characterised by the most intense competition between the industrial powers in a capitalist world market already reduced by the establishment of the U.S.S.R.

From the mid-1930's there was a gradual recovery of prices as limited relief from competition was obtained by the policies of protection then being pursued, and this rise was continued into the war years by the Government's inflationary policies. The effect of these policies was, however, and in this respect differently from the First World War, in large measure postponed until the easing of controls in the post-war years. The absence of competition from most of our main industrial rivals in many world markets until the later 1950's has been accompanied by steadily rising prices. But, as competition has once again intensified, so the price rise has slackened.

If we have anything to learn from the recent history of price movements it is certainly not that they will rise more or less continuously during the next thirty or forty years, but rather that as we move on into the intensely competitive world of the 1960's they will tend to fall.

Nature of Economic Crisis

A second point in Comrade Dutt's contribution on which I would like to comment is his statement that the original question which the Economic Committee were called upon to answer tends to put the problem out of focus by laying excessive emphasis upon "the crisis of 1929-31, which was an entirely abnormal multiple crash due to a whole number of factors".

He goes on to argue that "the memory of the old normal process of the trade cycle as described by Marx has been replaced by these special memories, with the result that the absence of the recurrence of these abnormal situations has become the breeding ground for the host of reformist theories of the supposed new capitalism". Thus, "because the question has in fact been posed in a wrong way our answer appears to take a conservative defensive position in opposition to those who are trying to indicate changes in the character of present-day capitalism".

But has the question been posed in a wrong way? Comrades can read the relevant part of John Gollan's letter, at the beginning of the Economic Committee's Report. He speaks of "a crisis of the nature of 1930-31". This great crisis did have its own special features (as do all crises) but it also had those

features common to nearly all earlier crises; in particular, falling prices, squeezed profits, wage cuts, redundancy, idle factories and massive unemployment. Comrade Gollan's meaning, therefore, seems to me to be clear. He is asking why we have not had a crisis *with these features* since 1945.

And this is just the question which ordinary working people have been asking. For a crisis which remains largely in the newspapers is no crisis. Even a crisis of "the balance of payments" which provokes a Little Budget and removes some shillings from the pockets of working people, serious though it is for those who already find it hard to make both ends meet, is not equated by them with the crises that used to be, with all their attendant misery. The question remains—are these features of earlier crises likely to return in the 1960's?

Certainly we must avoid assuming that the features *particular* to the crisis of the 1930's are *general* to all crises, but to state that the crisis was "entirely abnormal" is to distort in the opposite direction. It is not the "special memories" arising from "these abnormal situations" which have given rise to reformist theories in the post-war world, but the absence, in this period, of all, or most, of the features common to nearly all crises throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Comrade Dutt suggests that continuing inflation reduces the likelihood of these features reappearing. "The process of inflation, however, is not a sharp, sudden crash, but a continuous expropriation. The purchasing-power of wages is steadily eaten away. . . . Thus, we have here . . . a consistent robbery of the mass of the people in contrast to, or in addition to, the short sharp attack of the old type. This development . . . etc., etc." So creeping inflation will bring about an automatic whittling away of real wages and a restoration of profit margins without the need for crisis, direct frontal assault upon the workers with wage cuts and the sack, without the unpleasantness of the crude old methods.

But the decisive reason why no British Government can allow this creeping inflation to continue into the 1960's emerges even from the cursory examination of the history of price movements which I have made. Competition between the industrial giants in capitalist world markets which are shrinking, not absolutely, but *relative* to the productive capacity of capitalist industry, is bound to intensify; and no national government could permit a rise in prices at home which would price its industries out of world markets.

The Report itself advances a number of other reasons why massive unemployment is unlikely to return. The Summary General Analysis comes to the firm conclusion that "conditions are thus maturing for a general crisis of over-production in the

capitalist half of the world, of far greater severity than that suffered in 1957-58", but it adds that there is unlikely to be "a full-blown economic crisis *of the type of the 1930's*". However, we are not told what characterises a 1930's-type crisis so we must assume simply that a "full-blown", i.e. deep or severe crisis, with massive unemployment, idle factories, etc., is unlikely.

Alternative to Crisis

Instead we are given the following alternative possibility, which is the only paragraph in the Report to have been italicised, and must, therefore, be considered an important conclusion. "*In sum, it is possible to envisage the factors which in the present stage of the general crisis of capitalism tend to operate to limit the extent of slumps. But these in no way overcome the internal contradictions of capitalism and appear to lead necessarily to a persistent weakening in the rate of economic development.*"

Consider for a moment the inconsistency contained within this conclusion. There are new factors operating, we are told, to limit the extent of slumps in the present stage of the general crisis, *but these in no way* overcome capitalism's internal contradictions. However, if the capitalist economy can now avoid "full-blown" crises then its basic internal contradiction (between production and consumption, between supply and demand) *must* be to some extent eased, or overcome. For what is a full-blown crisis but an expression of this contradiction at its most intense? One cannot have it both ways. Either these new factors now operate to ease, or overcome this basic contradiction *sufficiently* to avert full-blown crisis, or they do not.

I believe it is quite mistaken to suggest that a weakened rate of economic growth is a possible *alternative* to deep economic crisis in the traditional sense. Yet this is the clear implication in this paragraph. How happy the capitalists would be if they could really choose between a full-blown economic crisis and a weakening in the rate of growth of the economy! If this were so they might be able to hang on to their positions of power for a hundred years to come. But the analysis in the Report as a whole does not support this conclusion.

The main arguments advanced in its favour, under the subheading *counteracting factors*, stand out from this analysis like a row of sore thumbs. Firstly: "The maintenance and increase of the level of Government expenditures, notably for military purposes." But for some years now the proportion of the national income disposed of by the government has been falling. And although it remains substantially greater than prewar there is no evidence that at existing levels it is sufficient to check a full-blown crisis of overproduction.

Secondly: "the general weakening in the position of imperialism places the working class in a stronger position to resist redundancy and to fight to maintain its living standards." The fight against the sack is mainly an economic fight; the fight to maintain living standards is both economic (wage negotiations) and political (social services etc.). As regards the former what evidence have we, in Western Europe or America, that the working class is now strong enough to resist redundancy, during a crisis, on a sufficient scale to have an appreciable effect in sustaining total effective demand?

The struggle can, and will, be transferred to the political field, but the working class will have to capture power before the capitalists concede the right to work.

Counter-Cyclical Action

The political fight to maintain and increase state benefits leads us to the third, and crucial argument—deliberate counter-cyclical action by the state. "The state has now sufficient political incentives and economic power to intervene during a recession to check this downward spiral of economic activity, culminating in a depression." With this statement, I think, no Keynesian would disagree. But is it correct? The main way in which the capitalist state intervenes to check a recession is by taking action to increase total effective demand, and thus ease the basic contradiction between supply and demand (e.g., government spending is increased without a corresponding increase in taxation, via a budget deficit).

But the fallacy underlying such reasoning is the petty-bourgeois delusion that the state is neutral, or above class. The three main sectors of public, or state-controlled, demand for goods and services are, the military, social welfare, and expenditure by the nationalised industries. The total expenditure in each is determined by the class struggle and the class interests of the monopolists. As the Report says elsewhere: "military expenditures are an expression of basic political decisions, and are not well adapted to serve as a basis for counter-cyclical policies". The same can be said for most other central and local government expenditures, and in particular expenditure on welfare, which is extracted from the capitalist state under pressure by the working class. In recent years this has been steadily whittled down, and in a crisis the capitalists would certainly attempt to slash it still further. Who would be rash enough to predict that at such a time the working class could force a substantial *improvement* in welfare expenditure from the capitalist state?

Much has been made in recent years of the possibility of adjusting the investment programmes of the nationalised industries to counter economic crisis.

But only recently a White Paper revealed government thinking on this matter.

"The aim of expansion with stability conditions the pace of those of the investment programmes which are designed to meet basic economic requirements and so the bulk of the work on them cannot lightly be deferred or advanced. . . . There is, therefore, a large proportion of public investment where it would not be sensible to try to engineer short-term variations in momentum to match changes in economic circumstances as rapid [*sic*] or as relatively mild as those experienced in recent years."

International Competition

Finally, imperialist rivalry is the decisive reason why no capitalist government would take counter-cyclical action on the scale required to check a major crisis, no matter how strong the pressures at home. Consider what might be required. After a sharp rise in the 1860's and early 1870's exports declined 25 per cent in value between 1872 and 1876. And after some expansion in the 1920's exports fell by 50 per cent between 1929 and 1932. Since the Second World War exports have again been greatly increased, and today account for about 50 per cent more of the national product than before the war. A decline of 25 per cent in the next few years (by no means impossible in view of the intense competition now developing) would mean a reduced demand for the export industries of up to £800 million per annum. But if even a tithe of this slump in demand was countered by government deficit spending at home the internal price level would be raised relative to those in other countries, and exports would slump still further.

International competition excludes this action being taken by any one national government, and there is not much evidence that the capitalist governments of the West would be prepared to co-ordinate policies around such a Keynesian goal.

One can but agree with another sentence from this very same section of the Report. "So far as the capitalist state is concerned it has only very limited possibilities of action in relation to the basic economic contradictions."

In short, I believe that the Report ends a valuable analysis with a contradictory concluding section which cannot be reconciled with that analysis. A much clearer picture would emerge if this section headed *counteracting factors* were deleted, and the following paragraph, which immediately precedes it, italicised as a main conclusion. "*The maturing of the contradiction between production and consumption is reflected in the building up of excess productive capacity, and a decline in the rate of profit and in profit expectation. Sooner or later this is accompanied by a growth in unemployment and a slowing down in the rate of growth of the economy.*"

On Stages of Social Development

Robert Browning

ROBIN JARDINE'S contribution in the July issue raises a point which has often been touched on before. The discrepancy between Marx's formulation in the *Critique of Political Economy*, with its "Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production", and later threefold divisions of class society need surprise only those who view the statements of Marxist thinkers *sub specie aeternitatis*. Nevertheless it has in the past given rise to a great deal of sterile polemic in which the same small stock of facts has been made to support more and more far-fetched interpretations of what Marx meant by the Asiatic mode of production. A late outlier of this depressing and Jesuitical literature is the ex-Marxist—or Marxist heretic—Wittfogel's book *Oriental Despotism*, 1959.

However we now have far more evidence than had our predecessors, and we can discuss a problem of this kind without feeling—one hopes—that the whole of Marxism stands or falls by our answer. The question whether in Asia in general, and in China and India in particular, there was a stage which can usefully—and this is the important word—be described as slave society is primarily one for experts in Asian history. And it is not one in which quick, cut-and-dried answers, such as Comrade S. A. Dange tried to produce during three months in a British jail (*India from Primitive Communism to Slavery*, Bombay, 1949) have much value. The debate will go on for a long time, as fresh evidence turns up and deeper insights are attained.

"Predominant Form of Production"

The present writer has, unfortunately, no special knowledge of Asian affairs. But some experience of studying the Greco-Roman world suggests certain directions in which Robin Jardine's arguments can be advanced or amended. First, the concept of a "predominant form of production" needs careful formulation. It certainly cannot be taken to imply that the majority of the population, or even a very large minority of it, is engaged in the particular form of production. To take an example from modern times, few would dispute that in 1914 the predominant form of production over the world as a whole was capitalism. Yet scarcely 100 million people were directly involved in capitalist relations of production as wage-labourers or employers. This

question of how many slaves are needed to constitute slave society is really meaningless as it stands. Interestingly enough, a conference of Soviet historians of the ancient world held in Moscow in December of last year (reported in *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii* 1961, No. 2) emphasised this very point in their discussion of Greco-Roman slavery.

This leads on to a second point. Robin Jardine asks (p. 223) whether "there is any evidence to show that agriculture, the basis of the whole, was carried on mainly by slaves (in India and China)". There is probably no region of the world and no period of history for which such evidence is forthcoming. Since neolithic times the great mass of humanity has engaged in subsistence farming; it may still be the occupation of the majority of mankind. It is a primitive mode of production which yields very little more than what is required to keep the farmer and his family alive. That little surplus value, or some part of it, may be "raked off" in various ways by a ruling class, ways which are often very difficult to define, and which take some of their colouring from the relations in those branches of production which result in a high surplus value. The Greeks saw these dependent peasants as semi-slaves, modern scholars have equated them with various categories of serfs in western European feudal society, or even with the tenant farmers of the present-day capitalist world. What determines the nature of a society are the productive relations in those branches of production where high surplus values are produced. Even though they may directly involve only quite a small proportion of the population, these productive relations largely determine the whole political and cultural superstructure.

Thirdly, there are, by and large, no statistics available for pre-capitalist societies. The historian used to dealing with the modern world feels lost without them, and tends to grasp at any plausible-looking figure without enquiring too closely how it was obtained. The figure of "some 50 per cent" quoted by Robin Jardine for slaves in Greece is certainly much too high to apply to any extensive area at any time. For all we know Professor Goodrich's one per cent of slaves in China may be as wild an exaggeration in the opposite direction. What one does find is occasional quantitative data relating to particular enterprises at particular times. It is a

matter of some delicacy to decide just how representative these figures are. In general one has to avoid the temptation to make sweeping quantitative generalisations. In any case, as has been suggested in the preceding paragraph, they may not be all that important.

Different Forms of Slavery

Fourthly, we in England today, and even more so Marx and Engels in their time, cannot but see slaves through the eyes of Roman lawyers. But the slavery about which we are talking here is an economic, not a legal category, and a man may well not fit into the elaborate structure of definitions worked out by the Roman jurists and still be without a shadow of doubt a slave. In this sense Marxist thought on the matter has, for good historical reasons, been Europe-centred. But the Romans themselves found it hard to decide whether certain categories of persons outside their own society were slaves or free men. And in so far as we see relations of production through their eyes we find it even harder. One has to try to penetrate behind juridical status, social position, and the like to the economic reality. This has not always been done consistently in Marxist discussions of Asiatic societies.

Fifthly, we are all falling over backwards today

trying not to see things from too narrowly a western point of view. This is a necessary corrective to earlier distortions of world history. But do not let us forget that from the Bronze Age onwards Europe has been in a peculiar position, and that it was in Europe and in Europe alone that capitalism reached its full development and gave birth to socialism. Gordon Childe in his posthumous book (*The Prehistory of European Society*, 1958) suggests some of the causes underlying the "privileged" position of Europe. We can recognise that our ancestors a hundred generations ago had an important run of luck which put them on the "express train" of history without being ourselves inflated with pride.

And lastly, let us remember that however much we sharpen our definitions, and however much new evidence we accumulate, answers to questions about the stages of class society have the status of working hypotheses, like the laws of physics or any other products of inductive reasoning. They may attain a very high degree of probability, and become indispensable equipment for the conduct of life. But they may conceivably be refuted by new facts, and they are nearly always capable of more refined and accurate formulation. So do not let us begin to regard them as we do the laws of a deductive science, such as mathematics—or theology.

Bill Tait

THE contribution under this heading in your July issue challenges the view that slavery was an essential economic stage in the historical development of society, and suggests that this view was based on too exclusive a regard to the classical European civilisation.

Comrade Jardine, however, implies that feudalism developed in succession to slavery after the fall of the Roman Empire. Yet the late Gordon Childe, to quote only one authority, points to the beginning of feudalism in Italy, with a "manor" system, as early as the third century A.D., when the slave economy was already beginning its long collapse. This seems to indicate that feudalism, which was to replace slavery, grew up inside the slave economy, as capitalism grew up within the feudalism which it in turn was to replace. In Italy at least, therefore, feudalism was not something that came out of the blue when slavery collapsed; it had been developing for a couple of centuries before the fall of Rome in A.D. 476.

Moreover, while the rising bourgeois class overthrew the power of the feudal class, there is no mention in any history of a serious conflict between the rising feudal class and the slave-owners.

Rather it seems that the slave-owners increasingly adopted the feudal system as more economic, and economically necessary in proportion as the slave-based economy collapsed.

The development in the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) seems to have been somewhat similar. Byzantium was not to fall to the Turks for nearly a thousand years; yet according to Jack Lindsay's book, feudalism had basically replaced slavery as the economic system of Byzantium by the eighth century A.D. There is no record of any revolution in Byzantium, nor was there any overthrow of the state by barbarian tribes or by anyone else. There is a recorded class conflict in Byzantium—represented by the Iconoclast movement—but this followed rather than preceded the emergence into feudalism, and does not fit into a picture of conflict between feudal and slave-owning classes.

Nor is it clear that slavery everywhere followed the primitive communal system. In recent years our knowledge of Cnossos and Mycenae has been greatly increased, and it is difficult to believe that from the fifteenth to the twelfth centuries B.C. a primitive communal society could have supported the rich Minoan civilisation, which seems

to have been partly feudal and partly dependent on trade. Nor does Homer, reflecting the Mycenaean civilisation—and finally edited around 700 B.C.—paint a picture of either a primitive communal or of a slave society: what is depicted is again rather a feudal society.

In short, in the classical world, feudalism appears to have both preceded and succeeded slavery.

If this was so, was there any inherent difference between pre-slavery feudalism and post-slavery feudalism, or is the fact that modern capitalism arose within and out of the latter due to other factors?

The world of Beowulf too, like that of Homer, was a feudal one. But so far as we know the Nordic peoples had neither passed through a stage of slavery nor had they been Romanised.

Are there not grounds for thinking that feudalism of some sort followed the primitive communal system, and that the stage of slavery occurred only in limited areas of the world? (This, of course, is not to question the existence of domestic slavery over a very long period of history.) Africa seems, in its greater part, to be a clear example of the primitive communal system developing into feudalism without any intervening stage of slavery.

MAO TSE-TUNG

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